



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

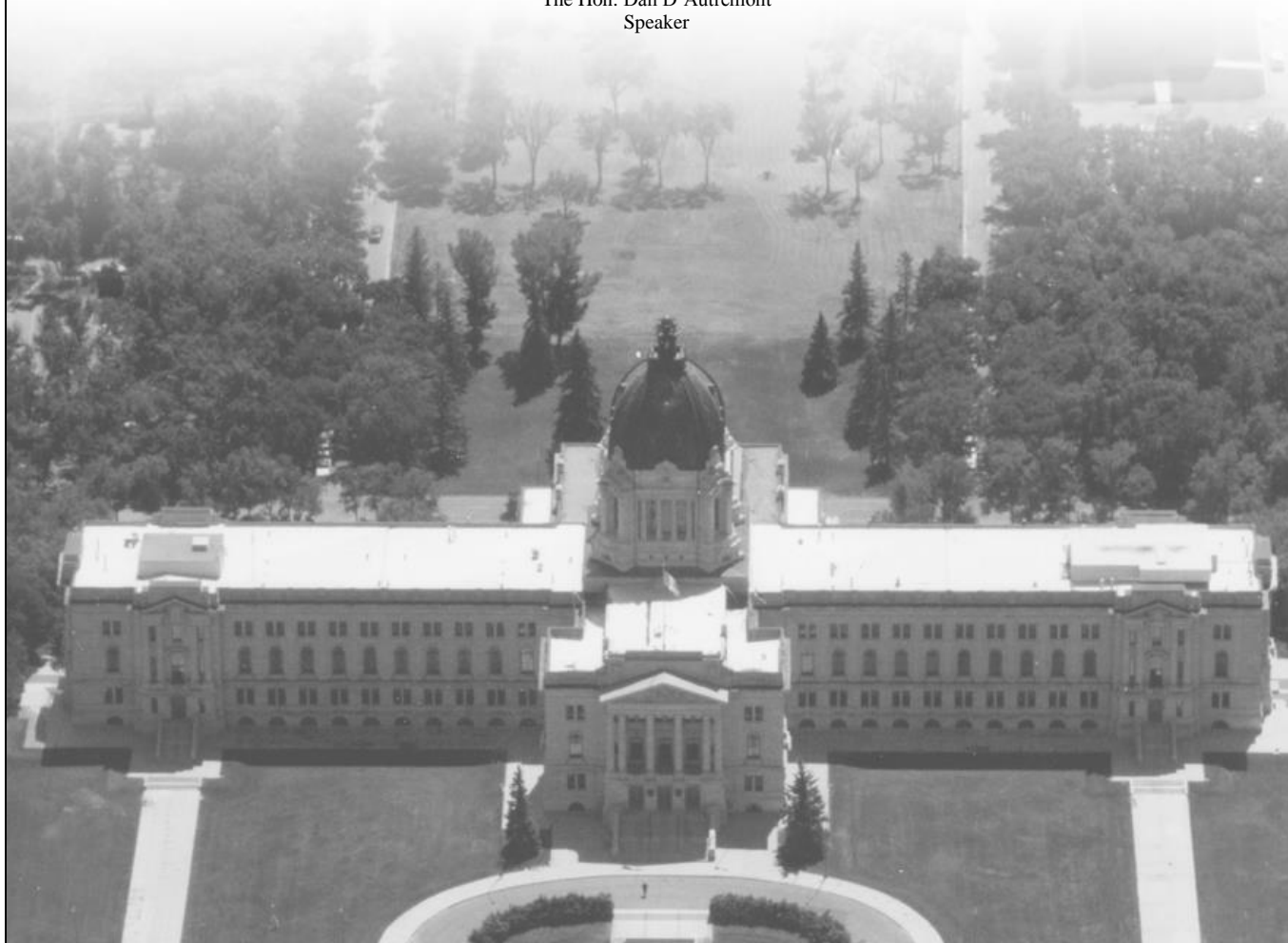
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Dan D'Autremont
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. Dan D’Autremont
 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall
 Leader of the Opposition — Cam Broten

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Broten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Campeau, Hon. Jennifer	SP	Saskatoon Fairview
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
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Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
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McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
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Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
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Parent, Roger	SP	Saskatoon Meewasin
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Reiter, Hon. Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu’Appelle Valley
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Stewart, Hon. Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Tell, Hon. Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Tochor, Corey	SP	Saskatoon Eastview
Toth, Don	SP	Moosomin
Vermette, Doyle	NDP	Cumberland
Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Hon. Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Wyant, Hon. Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
Young, Colleen	SP	Lloydminster

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Advanced Education.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier today the member from Saskatoon Greystone and myself had an opportunity to make an announcement at the University of Regina with respect to international education strategy.

And joining us today in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, are a number of students representing various post-secondary educational institutions here in the province, along with some of their advisers, who were with us at the announcement earlier this morning. Many of them are dressed in traditional wear from their respective home countries, Mr. Speaker. Many of them, I had the opportunity . . . They'd come up and have a conversation with me and told me their personal stories with respect to where they come from and what they're studying here in Canada, in Saskatchewan, and what their plans are for the future.

So, Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming these students in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, who hail from such countries as Pakistan, Iran, Korea, Nigeria, Brazil, Saudi Arabia, China, Mexico, Bangladesh, Thailand, India and the Philippines, and I'm sure there's some others we might have missed, Mr. Speaker. I'd ask all members to give them a very warm welcome to the Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to join with the minister in welcoming these international students to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan.

Certainly it seems to have been a good announcement this morning. And by looking at all those bright, smiling faces in the gallery I can tell, and not just from the experience here, Mr. Speaker, but certainly in some of the classes that I have the privilege to attend at the University of Regina, I know about that diversity that is brought from around the world via our international students to us each and every day. So it's good to see these individuals here at the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan. I join with the minister in welcoming them here today. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Parks, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Mr. Docherty: — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the rest of the Assembly, I'd like to welcome, sitting in the west gallery, a group of 37 grades 5 through 8 students from St. Peter Elementary School. Joining them today are Ms. Goodon, Mrs. Klein — just give a little wave — Ms. White, and Mr. Chabot.

It's always a great opportunity to introduce a group of students in one's own constituency, and I look forward to again, every single time, getting stumped in questions after question period today. But I'd like to ask all members to join me in welcoming this group from St. Peter today to the legislature. Thanks.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to join with the member opposite in welcoming these students from St. Peter School and these teachers that have joined us here today. And proud to as well recognize their incredible Day of Dignity activities and then the exceptional efforts that the school has taken on, and individual students, in setting goals and bringing about acts of dignity that certainly strengthen our community.

I want to thank the remarkable Ms. Karen Goodon, Ms. Klein, Ms. White, Mr. Chabot for their leadership. It's a pleasure to have them here today, and I ask all members to join with me in welcoming these students, these teachers to their Assembly.

And, Mr. Speaker, while still on my feet, seated in the west gallery, to you and through you it's a pleasure to introduce Ms. Sandi Urban-Hall, a school board member for Prairie Valley schools, someone this Assembly knows well, someone who's provided a lot of leadership to her community, to education in this province, and to our province as a whole.

Ms. Sandi Urban-Hall has also served as the president of the Saskatchewan School Boards Association, the Canadian School Boards Association, and very rightfully was recognized with a lifetime achievement recognition at the SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association] conference. In fact, it was the first conference that brought together SSBA, LEADS [League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents], and SASBO [Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials] together, and it was a tremendous evening to honour someone who's given so much to her province. So I ask all members to recognize Ms. Sandi Urban-Hall. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the government, I'd like to join with the opposition member in welcoming Sandi Urban-Hall to the legislature. She's made a strong contribution to education in our province in a number of different capacities, most recently as president of SSBA, and is somebody we enjoyed working with, passionately committed to bettering education for students in . . . [inaudible]. And when you get a Lifetime Achievement Award, it's usually because you've worked for a lifetime. So I won't make any comments about age, but congratulations, best wishes, and welcome to the legislature today.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley.

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister and the member opposite in welcoming Sandi to her Legislative Assembly. Sandi and I sit on the board of Equal Voice, and I've enjoyed her fellowship but also her

leadership. So thank you very much for attending today.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition that calls for greater protection for Saskatchewan citizens from developers who default on fixed-price contracts with the Saskatchewan government.

We know that this past September, this government walked away from a new 48-unit, low-income affordable housing project in Regina, allowing a private developer to instead take control of and then rent the units at full market price. And when asked to explain how this, how the government could allow the developer to back out of a fixed-price contract without any penalties, the Minister of Social Services said, and I quote, “You’re assuming that there’s these desperate homeless people,” showing how disconnected this government is from the realities within our community. Mr. Speaker, I’d like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: cause the government to recognize that there are indeed desperate homeless people in our province; and to immediately reverse its policy of now allowing private developers with whom the government has close relationships to default on fixed-price contracts for affordable housing projects.

Mr. Speaker, I do so present. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise once again in the Assembly to present petitions on behalf of concerned citizens as it relates to the unsafe conditions created by that government on Dewdney Avenue. They recognize the safety concern is something that requires urgent action. Certainly a west bypass is an important long-term solution, something we’re going to continue to push for in a timely way. But immediately there needs to be actions taken to ensure safety and frankly get the heavy-haul trucks off of Dewdney Avenue where they shouldn’t be. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on the provincial government to immediately take action as it relates to the unacceptable danger, disturbance, and infrastructure damage caused by the heavy-haul truck traffic on Dewdney Avenue west of the city centre, to ensure the safety and well-being of communities, families, residents, and users; and that those actions and plans should include rerouting the heavy-haul truck traffic, receive provincial funding, and be developed through consultation with the city of Regina, communities, and residents.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

These petitions today are signed by concerned residents of . . . Actually all of the signatories here today live directly on

Dewdney Avenue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of Creighton, Denare Beach, and area. Many residents in these communities are struggling with disabilities and currently do not have the supports and services they need and deserve. And the prayer reads:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the provincial government of Saskatchewan to establish and build a residential day program in the Creighton/Denare Beach region to support the immediate and ongoing needs of the community and so that persons with intellectual disabilities thrive in their respective community.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by many good people of the North. I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I’m once again proud to stand in my place today to present a petition in reference to the second bridge for Prince Albert. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to guarantee that a second bridge that serves central and northern Saskatchewan, and as well as the city of Prince Albert, will receive a commitment from senior governments.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed this petition are primarily from Moose Jaw. And I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Riversdale.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to present a petition today in support of safe staffing levels in long-term care. Those who’ve signed the petition point out that many aspects of long-term care are deteriorating under this government; that the Government of Saskatchewan actually recognize the need for safe staffing levels to provide hands-on care to residents; that the government is failing to fix the basics in long-term care, including rejecting the further urgent requests from long-term care facilities for increased and needed staffing levels; that the government has removed the regulations requiring a minimum standard of care for seniors, resulting in neglect; that chronic understaffing in long-term care facilities results in unacceptable conditions, including unanswered calls for help, infrequent bathing, and a rise in physical violence amongst residents; and that fixing the basics and achieving a real improvement in long-term care services requires a firm commitment to actually listen to front-line health care workers, residents, and their families, as opposed to failing to properly listen to their concerns. I’d like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request

the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the government to commit to the creation of safe staffing levels for all valued members of the health care team and to reintroduce actual numbers of staff to match the level of care needs and the number of residents under their care in long-term care facilities.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by folks from Saskatoon and Moose Jaw. I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition condemning this government's dangerous smart meter program. In the prayer that reads as follows the petitioners:

Respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the provincial government to take responsibility for its failure to act on readily available information about safety concerns with its smart meter program, including through the immediate resignation of the Minister Responsible for SaskPower and a fully independent inquiry into the concerning chain of events that severely compromised the safety of Saskatchewan families.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals from Weyburn, Saskatoon, and Langham. I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Lakeview.

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to present a petition on behalf of residents of Saskatchewan who are opposed to the privatization of jobs in the correctional service. The government wants to privatize jobs in the food service, doesn't recognize the fact that these jobs provide a supplement to the care and further development of young people who are caught in the correctional system or in the young offenders system. And so it reads:

We, in the prayer, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan may be pleased to cause the government to cancel its privatization in the corrections and young offender facilities in Saskatchewan.

This is signed by people from Regina and area.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Centre.

Transgender Day of Remembrance

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House to recognize the passing of a very solemn occasion, the Transgender Day of Remembrance. Transgender Day of Remembrance is an annual observance on November 20th that honours the memory of those who have been murdered through acts of transgender violence.

I, along with the member for Saskatoon Greystone and Saskatoon city councillor, Charlie Clark, was honoured to attend the ceremony organized by the USSU [University of

Saskatchewan Students' Union] Pride Centre at the University of Saskatchewan last Thursday evening.

Here in Saskatchewan, transgender people are among the most disenfranchised. Trans people are often pushed to the fringes of our society and face many barriers. Trans people face homelessness, depression, interpersonal violence at rates greater than the general population.

I've called many times for amendments to the Human Rights Code to include the terms gender identity and gender expression, but the government has refused to adopt these amendments. These protections are badly needed and would help to prevent violence and hatred in our communities. I hope that in the spirit of Transgender Day of Remembrance, all members will keep a pledge to end violence against transgendered people close to their hearts. Together we can build a better world, one without the evils of transphobia and homophobia. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[13:45]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Moosomin.

Canadian Western Agribition

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise in the House today to announce Canadian Western Agribition kicked off this morning at Evraz Place. From November 24th to 29th, Regina will be hosting Western Canada's premier agricultural marketplace trade show and rodeo. Each year Canadian Western Agribition attracts more than 125,000 visitors from more than 50 countries. This prestigious event happens over six days, showcasing some of North America's finest livestock, agricultural equipment, and an impressive trade show. It has more than 1,400 head of the best livestock in North America and 250,000 square feet of trade show space. Mr. Speaker, this gives some 400 vendors from around the world the opportunity to showcase their own small businesses.

This year Agribition has also added some new events, including eight national beef shows, an indigenous agricultural summit, a grain expo conference, and for the first time, a thinkAg career education expo for high school students to learn about careers in agriculture.

There is truly something for everyone at this year's event as Agribition also features more family and entertainment events. These include the junior rodeo competition, the stock dog competition, the Canadian Cowboys' Association finals rodeo, as well as the new event, full contact jousting.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all of my colleagues in this House to take the time out of their busy schedules to check out this world-class event hosted right here in Saskatchewan. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

Promoting Dignity for All People

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I rise in the Assembly today to bring recognition to some very impressive students and

teachers from St. Peter School here in Regina.

On October 15th, I had the honour to address the students and staff at St. Peter School for their Day of Dignity. Other presenters included the Multicultural Council, Amnesty International, the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], storyteller Simon Moccasin, and Elder Mike Pinay.

At the Day of Dignity, there were lots of discussions taking place about injustice around the world as well as locally. There is so much more that we all need to do to make sure that every child and every person is treated with dignity and respect. The 219 students at St. Peter School accepted my challenge and committed to 219 acts of dignity of their own, and are showing real responsibility and resolve to make their world and our community a better place for everyone through their meaningful actions.

I would like to specifically thank Ms. Karen Goodon for all of her work organizing this exceptional day, as well as all of the other presenters and students and staff who helped make the Day of Dignity such a great success. I hope that all members will join with me in congratulating the St. Peter's students and teachers who are here with us today for their great work to promote dignity for all people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Sutherland.

Advancing Housing Solutions in Saskatchewan

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to rise in the House today to talk about National Housing Day, which is recognized every November 22nd across Canada. It's an opportunity to recognize the importance of housing and our collective achievements in advancing housing solutions in Saskatchewan.

This day was marked in Saskatoon on November 21st with a luncheon sponsored by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, city of Saskatoon, and the Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership. Housing is a key priority, and we all must work together to ensure that people have access to shelter that fits within their budget.

Mr. Speaker, our government is doing its part. Since November 2007, we have invested over \$520 million to develop or repair more than 11,600 homes around the province. That's 11,600 families who can have a better quality of life.

Housing starts has been above average across the province. Retail housing starts are strong. The average provincial vacancy has reached a balanced level, and housing affordability is improving. This is very good news for our province, Mr. Speaker. We know that there is still much left to do; however, it is important to recognize our progress.

Mr. Speaker, we will continue to work closely with our partners to take steps to ensure the sustainable housing environment for all, especially those who need the most help. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Moose Jaw Health Foundation Festival of Trees

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past Saturday the member from Moose Jaw North and myself had the pleasure of attending the sold-out gala event of the holiday season, the Moose Jaw Health Foundation's Festival of Trees. Mr. Speaker, this year's event did not disappoint, with almost 500 guests attending. I'm pleased to announce that the evening raised \$269,970 for the Moose Jaw Health Foundation's capital equipment campaign for the new regional hospital.

This year's theme was Romance Me, and the night was filled with amazing decor, delicious food, and a gala auction and dance.

I would like to say thank you to the Moose Jaw Lions Club for matching the auction's first \$50,000 in bids. Also a big thank you to the JGL [Jameson, Gilroy, and B & L Livestock Ltd.] Group of Companies who announced their pledge of \$500,000 over the next five years to the capital equipment campaign.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not mention all the work that went into making this event. I would like to say a special thanks to my own constituency assistant and the Festival of Trees committee Chair, Laurie Axten Kosior, and to all the Festival of Trees committee members and volunteers.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask all members to join me in thanking all the volunteers, sponsors, donors, and attendees for their contributions to this great cause. I would also like to congratulate the Moose Jaw Health Foundation on another spectacular event. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Moose Jaw North.

Moose Jaw Team Wins Provincial Football Championship

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to congratulate the Moose Jaw Peacock Tornadoes on winning the Saskatchewan High School Athletic Association 3A provincial football championship.

The win was an exciting finish to another excellent season for the Tornadoes, as they have won 19 straight games for their second consecutive undefeated season. The Tornadoes cruised to a 63 to 13 victory over Regina Luther Lions at Mosaic Stadium to secure their second consecutive provincial title. Peacock took control in the early game, but they faced much more adversity earlier in the playoffs, having to come from behind to beat Yorkton in the league finals. They made an incredible comeback to defeat Saskatoon's Marion Graham Falcons on a wild final play in the provincial semifinals. The provincial final was a special victory for all of the graduating players who were able to end the high school football career with a provincial title.

Of note was quarterback Sawyer Buettner, who completed 13 of 16 pass attempts for 258 yards and three touchdowns. Buettner also ran for 51 yards and a touchdown. Along with his accomplishments with the Tornadoes, Buettner was named

MVP [most valuable player] for Team Saskatchewan, leading them to victory to the Football Canada Cup back in August.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating the Peacock Tornados players and coaches, led by Coach Blake Buettner, on another excellent season and repeating as Saskatchewan high school 3A provincial football championship. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley.

Fundraiser Supports Scholarships

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House today to speak about a wonderful fundraising event I attended last Thursday for the Canadian Federation of University Women, Regina. Myself as well as Virginia Jedlic co-chaired this event. Catered by the restaurant, Spices of Punjab, this fundraising dinner was well attended and provided funding for the annual scholarship given to two female students at the U of R [University of Regina].

Mr. Speaker, it is educated women such as this who continue to make Saskatchewan strong. CFUW [Canadian Federation of University Women] is committed to the pursuit of knowledge, the promotion of education, and improving the status of women and girls. CFUW has supported equality for women since 1919 and has worked actively for the betterment of society for all.

This non-profit organization has a long and stable history in Saskatchewan, as the first club met here in Regina in 1915. The Regina chapter is also part of the national CFUW, which is comprised of almost 9,000 members across Canada.

Events like this not only support the pursuit of higher education for members but showcase the strong female fellowship that is present in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in thanking those who attended the dinner last Thursday as well as a special thank you to Lily and Zoe Jedlic for the jobs they did in helping us in this event. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Provision of Care for Seniors and Investigation of Long-Term Care Facility

Mr. Broten: — My question is for the Premier. When very serious concerns are brought to the Health minister about a poor quality of care, what does the Premier expect the Health minister to do?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The answer to the member's question is that we would want all members of the government, MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] and ministers, to be able to investigate as quickly as is possible any concerns brought forward and then respond accordingly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Broten: — In June, the Health minister received a letter signed by 49 workers at the Santa Maria seniors home here in Regina, the same facility where Margaret Warholm spent her last awful few months. That letter, Mr. Speaker, was signed by 49 workers, and it raised very serious concerns about the quality of care in that facility.

But, Mr. Speaker, the minister didn't even bother to respond. He had an official write back saying the province only provides some funding for seniors' care, but all decisions about staffing, about resident care are left up to the health regions and the individual facilities. My question to the Premier: does he think that's acceptable?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — I'm told by the minister that upon receipt of the letter, action was taken with respect to direction to the region to work with the concerns that were being raised.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's been noted as a part of the recent debate over the very, very tragic loss, the unacceptable loss of Margaret's life and the circumstances surrounding that loss, that the particular institution has been making some investments, will be making continued investments in terms of improving care.

But I understand that the minister did take action for the work to be done with the staff, Mr. Speaker, and that's what we would expect the Health minister or any other minister to do when concerns are raised.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, when a letter is signed by 49 front-line staff at Santa Maria, that should have set off alarm bells for this minister. It should have caused a lot more action, Mr. Speaker, than a form letter being given out by a ministry official.

Concerns that were stated included poor quality of care because of chronic short-staffing, broken-down equipment, and bloated administration. And it's unbelievably frustrating to keep hearing the Premier and the Minister of Health just dismissing the crisis in seniors' care no matter how many concerns they hear, Mr. Speaker.

Now the Health minister claims, repeated here by the Premier, Mr. Speaker, that things in Santa Maria have improved since Margaret Warholm's awful premature death. My question for the Premier, Mr. Speaker, is this: what evidence does he have that anything has improved at Santa Maria?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the member will know, and I was in conversation with the Health minister while I was in India and this issue came to the forefront, the members of the House will know that the Health minister has encouraged and requested the Ombudsman to look at this particular case and be open to other cases that might come forward so that not only

can all of the facts be known about any of these concerns and complaints, Mr. Speaker, these very serious concerns and complaints, but also that we can be advised on potential improvements by the Ombudsman.

I note in the letter that the hon. member refers to, the minister is the one who has directed the action to occur, Mr. Speaker. And what I must categorically do is reject the premise of his question. Because early in his question, he said this government is, the implication is, wilfully ignoring seniors' care.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, this government has invested, invested unprecedented resources in seniors' care, in health care across the province. There are more care aids in Saskatchewan today. There are 400 more doctors practising today; 2,000-plus nurses practicing today. Mr. Speaker, this government is the one that stopped closing long-term care beds. That was what opposition members did in government. We've been opening long-term care beds, modernizing facilities, Mr. Speaker.

We have indicated to this House and on the public record that more needs to be done. But, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, let's be clear about the record: more personnel, more capital, Mr. Speaker, more funding for resources in the health regions for long-term care and acute care across the province.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

[14:00]

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, all the minister did was to direct a ministry official to reply to a letter signed by 49 people and then said, work with the region and figure it out. That's this government's definition and understanding of what action is when 49 workers come forward. My question to the Premier was, Mr. Speaker, what evidence does he have that anything has improved at Santa Maria? What is the evidence?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, there is a letter dated November 6th, 2014 from Santa Maria that highlights the specific actions that have been taken, beginning with the minister's request to the region and the ministry that something be done. We can get into the details of what they're reporting out, Mr. Speaker. We are going to be watching very carefully the progress on improvements that are expected of that institution with respect to this case and other concerns that might be coming forward. We can get into the specifics of what's in this letter; there are a number of them. We look forward to the next question from the member.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, today workers at Santa Maria are speaking out. They say they've had enough of this government's spin. The workers, Mr. Speaker, the workers say that nothing has improved. The workers even contradict the minister's earlier claim that additional training has been provided. They say that that is not true, Mr. Speaker.

My question is for the Premier. Is it acceptable for him that his Health minister is saying that the situation in the facility has

actually improved when those on the front lines say that that is not true and that it is actually getting worse?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I'm sure we'd like to hear that input directly from the workers, the front-line workers at the institution, and we would respond accordingly. The report we have from Santa Maria, in terms of changes that have been undertaken as a result of the request by the minister that there be an intervention from the region, include engaging the University of Saskatchewan to provide training to licensed staff and physical assessment for those staff who have not taken the course. If that's not been happening, we'd like to know why, and we look forward to hearing from the staff if that's the case.

They've engaged the Saskatchewan Association for Safe Workplaces in Health to provide comprehensive retraining to all staff in the area of transfer, lift, and repositioning. They were in the process of assessing best practices among special care homes in the province, Mr. Speaker. Within the collective bargaining structure, they have begun setting out clearer expectations to staff with respect to accountability within the residential family-centred philosophy. They've moved to a consistent assignment of staff which will assign staff to some group of residences for longer periods of time. Mr. Speaker, there's several other points.

If the hon. member is aware of, because he's been in contact with staff, that these changes have not been made, that improvement's not been made, then we would like to hear about those specific concerns. Because, Mr. Speaker, the record of this Health minister and the record of the government is, when the concerns are presented, they are earnestly pursued with a view to improved care for seniors.

Well you know, Mr. Speaker, the facts are that since we took over from the NDP [New Democratic Party], we have made massive investments in long-term care. That's the fact. And they want to heckle from their seats about something this serious, they can go ahead and do that.

Mr. Speaker, we have made record investments in health care specifically in the area of long-term care. There are more front-line staff. There are more care aids. The members talk about standards of care. We've acted on it by providing additional front-line staff, even while the total complement of beds have not increased significantly, Mr. Speaker.

So if the hon. member has some information from staff that we should be aware of, that these changes reported to the government by Santa Maria are not under way, he should provide it, and the government will act.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, this government, this minister should take this seriously, should listen to those on the front line. When we listened and hear from those on the front lines, Mr. Speaker, they see massive investments in bloated administration while there is poverty, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to having enough people on the front lines to provide care to our loved ones here in Saskatchewan. And this

government knows it, Mr. Speaker.

The workers who are speaking out today talk about bandages covered in feces and urine. These are bandages, Mr. Speaker, that are covering bedsores and other wounds. And these are bandages that are not being properly changed because the LPNs [licensed practical nurse] are stretched way too thin, Mr. Speaker. And this is happening at Santa Maria, according to the workers. And they say, Mr. Speaker, the response we just heard from this Premier tells a very different story and does not match up with what those on the front lines are experiencing. Bandages not being changed properly with feces and urine on them — that is disgusting and that is not anywhere near acceptable, Mr. Speaker.

My question to the Premier: why is this happening?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, we look forward to hearing directly from the front-line staff that the hon. member is referring to. With respect to the staff complement in the province of Saskatchewan, I will report to members of the House and the people of this province that since 2007, since our government was elected, full-time equivalents in nursing, in care are up in every single category.

There are 37 per cent more licensed practical nurses practising in the province providing care for people, 37 per cent more than were in existence under the NDP with roughly the same complement of long-term care beds. With respect to RNs [registered nurse], 9.3 per cent more than were practising when the NDP actually had a chance to do something rather than to just talk. There is 9.7 per cent more care aids today, right on the front line, providing care to Saskatchewan patients, including those in the long-term care facility.

We've recognized that there are some specific needs in long-term care. They've been responded to by an Urgent Issues Fund. Mr. Speaker, the response, it will continue.

The best indicator of past behaviour on the part of resourcing from the government, or the best indicator of future behaviour is what we've done. And what we've done is, in all of these categories, rather than talk about them, rather than simply raise questions in the legislature, we've acted: 400 more doctors, 2,000-plus more nurses, 37.4 per cent more licensed practical nurses. That's the group that he's just mentioned in his question, Mr. Speaker.

We would like to hear directly from the staff at Santa Maria as to the allegations that have been made now on the floor of the House. We'd like to hear about progress that we expect to be happening there based on the report from Santa Maria, based on the work of the ministry directed by the minister. And we look forward to getting that information.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, they did hear from those on the front lines. They heard from 49 of them who signed a letter and had it sent to the Minister of Health, Mr. Speaker. They knew about this, but the response from this government was just

sloughing it off, was to get a ministry official to give a letter and say, sort this out with the ministry. We're awesome — that's this approach that we see from this Premier and from this government right now.

But if they actually spoke to those on the front lines, Mr. Speaker, if their CEO [chief executive officer] tour actually listened to those on the front lines who provide the hands-on care on a day-to-day basis, they would hear a very, very different story, Mr. Speaker.

But that doesn't match up, Mr. Speaker, with their so-called action fund, a one-time drop in the bucket where we see much of the money still sitting and hasn't even been rolled out, not to mention, not to mention the requests that were denied by this government, Mr. Speaker.

The workers, the 49 who signed the letter, Mr. Speaker, the workers at Santa Maria, they talk about feeding seniors disgusting food — gross, constantly recycled leftovers. That's the information that they share. Even mouldy muffins, food that is mouldy, Mr. Speaker. My question to the Premier: what does he have to say about that?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we've taken the approach, Mr. Speaker, when issues were raised in long-term care, that this government would take the approach of an unprecedented \$10 million injection into long-term care, Mr. Speaker.

The member opposite references the fact that not all of the dollars have actually been allocated to all the regions. Mr. Speaker, that wouldn't be the case. The regions have received the dollars, but obviously when you're purchasing 700 pieces of equipment — lifts, slings, mattresses, overhead lifts, for example — it takes time to hire the contractors to put those in place. But, Mr. Speaker, I expect by the end of this year all of the \$10 million will have been allocated and accessed, Mr. Speaker, and that will give us an opportunity to evaluate to the extent that the \$10 million went to the front lines, Mr. Speaker.

But as the Premier mentioned as well, it's not just equipping the facilities with equipment, it's also equipping them with staff. And the Urgent Issues Action Fund provided for over 50 full-time equivalents on top of the 700 full-time equivalents that this government added in just seven years, Mr. Speaker, compared to the members opposite when they were in the government, when they had the opportunity to improve seniors' care. Mr. Speaker, this side, we're about action.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, we have a government that sits and stands and brags all at the same time as there are shocking and disturbing stories coming from the front lines. My question, Mr. Speaker, was about mouldy food being offered, being given to residents and constant leftovers recycled, meal after meal. My question to the Premier: what does he have to say about mouldy food being given to residents in long-term care?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well certainly, Mr. Speaker, we will be checking on that to ensure, Mr. Speaker, that that is not happening. I don't think it is up to, frankly, the government or the Minister of Health to tell a staff member to not feed mouldy food to a resident in long-term care. If that is something, Mr. Speaker, that we do have to instruct in long-term care, then certainly we will take that step. But, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the people that work in long-term care know that that is not appropriate, Mr. Speaker, and that our residents shouldn't be treated in that manner.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, what this government should be doing is ensuring that the right resources are put onto the front lines so that good food is given to residents, so that residents don't go three weeks without a bath, so that there are enough care aids to help someone to the bathroom, Mr. Speaker, and enough LPNs to ensure that bandages are changed when they're covered in feces and urine. That's what this government should be ensuring takes place in our health care system.

Mr. Speaker, the staff that work at Santa Maria also tell of two care aids looking after 49 residents, including residents with Alzheimer's and dementia. Many of these residents don't sleep. They need assistance. They're sick. They wander and sometimes they fight. My question is to the Premier: does he think it's acceptable for two care aids to look after 49 people with dementia?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, certainly we have a mixed complement when it comes to long-term care. We will have, ensuring that there's coverage from an RN, we'll also have a complement of LPNs and we'll also have care aids within long-term care, Mr. Speaker. The time that those staff are on in terms of the different complement, in terms of the different staff mix, obviously would depend on the time of day, Mr. Speaker, and the needs of the residents. Mr. Speaker, Santa Maria would not be I think unlike other facilities that provide good care in this city in terms of the complement of LPNs, care aids, and RNs, Mr. Speaker.

But in terms, just with respect to what the member, what the Leader of the Opposition has raised, if that is the case, Mr. Speaker, of staff members providing food that is mouldy, in this case, as the member opposite has raised, if that is the case, Mr. Speaker, then I hope that we would have the support of the members opposite. I hope we would have the support of the region, of the administration of this facility, and of the union leadership, Mr. Speaker, that action would be taken so that that is not the case, Mr. Speaker, and that employees, Mr. Speaker, would not be treating our residents in that fashion.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the workers say they threw out the mouldy food because, yes, it was mouldy. The question is, Mr. Speaker, how it is, how it is that this government puts health regions, puts care facilities in a place, Mr. Speaker, where they are short-staffed, where mouldy food is offered,

where bandages aren't taken care of? And we see a continuing approach from this government, Mr. Speaker, where they dismiss. They blame. They say it's other people who should be doing their job, Mr. Speaker.

Well when 49 people write to the minister, Mr. Speaker, and say that there are major problems, they sign their name to a letter, that warrants a lot more, Mr. Speaker, than the minister directing a ministry official and giving them some letter saying, please sort this out with the health region. It's really not our problem. This is the attitude we see from this government day after day. What will it take? What will it take for this government to realize that there is a crisis in seniors' care and that their response is failing miserably?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — So, Mr. Speaker, just a few minutes ago, we heard from the Leader of the Opposition that staff were feeding mouldy food to residents in long-term care. Now all of a sudden the story changes, that the staff apparently, I hope, did the right thing by throwing the food away before it reached the residents, Mr. Speaker. Time and time again, what we hear from the Leader of the Opposition, we have to check on this side, Mr. Speaker, because the facts don't exactly add up, Mr. Speaker, after it comes from the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker.

But we take these cases very serious. That's why this government from day one has invested in new long-term care facilities: 13 in this province, Mr. Speaker, in fact 15 when you add in Samaritan Place, which the members opposite opposed, and Swift Current, which is a P3 [public-private partnership], which they opposed.

Mr. Speaker, we've added 750 full-time equivalents, 700 pieces of equipment, over \$1 billion put into health care capital in this province, much of that into long-term care — much different from the members opposite when they were in the government.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, that response that we just heard from the Health minister is absolutely disgusting. And once again, Mr. Speaker, it is a track record that we see of this government of minimizing the crisis. It is a track record of blaming other people. It is a track record, Mr. Speaker, of not listening to concerns when families and those on the front lines come forward.

[14:15]

And for the minister to say that these health care workers that are speaking out, Mr. Speaker, have their facts wrong, once again shows they're not concerned, Mr. Speaker, with getting to the bottom of this. They are concerned with saving face. And that minister and that Premier should be ashamed of their approach in dealing with the seniors' care crisis here.

Mr. Speaker, the workers at Santa Maria also talk about a very serious matter, as all these matters have been. They talk about other premature deaths that have happened because of falls, and they say that management hides the truth from families. My

question is to the Premier. Will he immediately commit to a full investigation of this?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Any time there are concerns that are raised by family members in terms of the care that's provided within our care that we provide, Mr. Speaker, we take that seriously. Obviously, forwarding this most recent case to the Ombudsman is an indication that we take this serious, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we're also very concerned about falls in long-term care. That's why going back, Mr. Speaker, to 2011, this government in working with our regions and our facilities put together a Saskatchewan Falls Collaborative that was developed with the aim of reducing falls and injuries from falls in our long-term care facilities.

Mr. Speaker, while we still have more work to do in terms of reducing the number of falls, I can report to the House and to the public, since the collaborative was put in place in 2011, we've seen a 25 per cent reduction in falls in long-term care and a significant reduction in injuries, Mr. Speaker. But we still have obviously more work to do to prevent falls in long-term care. We know the serious nature and the complications that they can cause. But, Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that we've been taking seriously since 2011.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, enough with the talking points already coming from this minister. We have workers at Santa Maria who say that there have been falls that have led to premature deaths. These workers, Mr. Speaker, say that families have not been told the whole story and do not know the truth about these falls. These are serious allegations coming from the workers. And my question is to the Premier. Will he commit right now to have an investigation of these very, very serious concerns?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly the Ombudsman will be investigating this most recent case that was before the House late last week, Mr. Speaker. But obviously the Ombudsman does have the latitude in looking at Santa Maria and looking further beyond Margaret Warholm's particular case and that situation, Mr. Speaker.

If there are findings greater to that specific case that relate to Santa Maria, obviously we will take any recommendations seriously from the Ombudsman. But that is why, Mr. Speaker, we did forward this situation on to the Ombudsman and look forward to her work.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, with this minister, with this government, it's always someone else's job to get to the bottom of what's being concerned. There are health workers speaking out who say that premature falls, that falls have led to premature deaths, Mr. Speaker. And this government should be

taking that seriously and should be willing to investigate that, Mr. Speaker.

The workers speaking out today are clear that Santa Maria is not an outlier. It is not a unique facility in any way. The problems at Santa Maria, Mr. Speaker, happen at other facilities in Regina and happen throughout the entire province of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker . . . See, they're dismissing it right now. This is the track record. It takes 49 people, Mr. Speaker, writing a letter to the minister, and still no action. It takes Margaret's family coming to the legislature, heckles from the other side, and no action. It takes health care workers coming forward, Mr. Speaker, and no action from this government. They don't take this seriously, Mr. Speaker. They just heckle. They just put the blame on someone else, Mr. Speaker.

What is clear in all of these stories is that at the heart of the problem, at the heart of the seniors' care crisis is short-staffing and the absence of minimum care standards. That's why we have these problems, Mr. Speaker. My question to the Premier: does he think Santa Maria is some unique outlier, or will he finally recognize that these are concerns throughout the entire long-term care system in Saskatchewan? What is his opinion of that?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure, but I think in the hon. member's preamble to his question, he is not comfortable with the Ombudsman doing the investigation of this case through Santa Maria. Well he just said in his preamble that it was the minister's attempt to deflect this, to blame someone else.

What we're going to do in this particular case, Mr. Speaker, is have the Ombudsman investigate it. And obviously if there's other concerns, and there may well be, then the scope of the Ombudsman will be to investigate Santa Maria, Mr. Speaker, the facility in general and every single case that comes forward. And if there are systemic problems and recommendations that flow from that, we will act, Mr. Speaker, because we have a track record of acting . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Mr. Speaker, well he says no.

Mr. Speaker, he needs to turn around and ask his colleague, the member for Lakeview who was the Health minister, ask him why the NDP closed long-term care beds in the province of Saskatchewan, bed after bed after bed. Turn around and ask the Health minister, why did we not staff the system properly? Why were we short 1,000 nurses? Why were there not enough care aids in the province under the NDP? Where were the LPNs, Mr. Speaker? That's the question he needs to turn around and ask his Health minister, his former Health minister, because that's the record of the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, since 2007 this fact is being turned around. We're now opening long-term care beds. Mr. Speaker, we're investing in human resources. We're hiring 2,000 more nurses, 400 more doctors, 37 per cent increase in LPNs, more care aids, Mr. Speaker. Because after 16 years of them talking about better health for seniors, it's time for action; that's what we're

engaged in on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, with more to come.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Advanced Education.

International Education Strategy

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, international education is important to our province and to our economy. It gives students the opportunity to develop a global perspective and supports our province's efforts to engage on the international stage.

We know it provides a unique opportunity for Saskatchewan to build relationships in other parts of the world, to encourage students to study abroad and learn from other cultures, and welcome international students who bring global perspectives into our classrooms and into our communities, Mr. Speaker.

That is why international education and engagement is an important part of the Saskatchewan plan for growth. It is also highlighted in the final report submitted by the Asia Advisory Council. We want to strengthen Saskatchewan's connection to the world and develop new partnerships to help build our province's innovation future. This helps to grow our economy at home and build a better life for all Saskatchewan residents.

And that is why today, Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to announce the international education strategy at the University of Regina. The strategy will help us respond to the targets and the plan for growth, and addresses the recommendations of the Asia Advisory Council. It will focus on three main goals, Mr. Speaker. First of all, increasing global engagement, which means creating more opportunities for Saskatchewan students to study and work abroad. It means bringing the world to Saskatchewan. We want more post-secondary international students to choose Saskatchewan for their place of study. And it means growing global research partnerships, increasing the number and value of Saskatchewan international research partnerships.

To accomplish these goals, Mr. Speaker, we will implement a number of initiatives. We will re-establish a post-secondary international education council to facilitate ongoing conversations and collaboration between government, post-secondary institutions, and industry. We will implement an international future scholarship. In its first year, we will send up to 20 students abroad annually for business-focused studies in priority markets.

In partnership with the Ministry of Economy and Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership, we will develop a provincial marketing strategy to brand Saskatchewan internationally and encourage more Saskatchewan people to study and work abroad. And, Mr. Speaker, we will partner with organizations like Mitacs to attract exceptional international undergraduate and graduate students. Mr. Speaker, our government has consulted extensively with many stakeholders on this strategy, and all have been very supportive.

Mr. Speaker, last week our province joined over 100 countries around the world in celebrating International Education Week. Today at the University of Regina, I was pleased to announce our international education strategy. I want to take this opportunity to thank all those that worked with us to help develop this strategy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I'd like to, off the top, thank the minister for providing me with an advance copy of his remarks so that I might better inform my response to them.

But certainly the three goals, as stated under the international education strategy, would seem to be making good sense in terms of increasing global engagements, bringing Saskatchewan to the world, and the growing global research partnerships. Certainly, Mr. Speaker, it's a global village that we operate in, a global marketplace. And if we're to succeed in that atmosphere, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan must realize that it's a two-way street in terms of that engagement, in terms of that partnership that must go on with the world around us, and also bringing the world around us right here to Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

So we'll be very interested to see the specific measures that help flesh out the goals that are iterated here, Mr. Speaker. But on the face of it, it would seem to be a good set of announcements and we'll look forward for more news to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Corrections and Policing.

Centre of Responsibility Opens in Saskatoon

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring the attention of this legislature to the launch of our province's second centre for responsibility, or COR for short, in Saskatoon on Friday, November 21st. This new COR and recently launched Saskatoon Hub make up the Community Mobilization Saskatoon. These initiatives bring together government, the education system, community agencies, health care, First Nations, and police to improve the well-being and safety of Saskatchewan communities.

Since launching in April of this year, the Saskatoon Hub has intervened in more than 100 situations involving issues such as drug addiction, homelessness, poverty, truancy from schools. While the Hub addresses the immediate concerns, the COR will take this information and apply it to long-term improvements with a focus on community safety and wellness. This data will provide recommendations on how to better address the causal factors of crime and victimization in Saskatoon and across the province.

The Prince Albert Hub and COR was the first to get off the ground four years ago. Since then the community of Prince Albert has seen a 38 per cent drop in violent crime rates, a 23 per cent decrease in youth arrest rates, and the creation of a regional alcohol strategy.

The launch of the new Saskatoon COR is an important part of

the province's building partnerships to reduce crime initiative which is a key component of the Government of Saskatchewan's child and family agenda. And to show our support, Corrections and Policing is pleased to provide 475,000 in annual funding to support the operation of the COR in Saskatoon. Collaboration is the foundation upon which these initiatives are built and we are proud to be working with our partners to keep Saskatoon and Saskatchewan strong and safe. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Lakeview.

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join in congratulating the minister and the ministry and the city of Saskatoon and the area in developing the COR program for Saskatoon. It's very important that this be identified as a collaboration that is led with money from the ministry that allows for many of the community organizations to spend their time and effort looking at how crime can be prevented.

I know that the leadership shown from the police force in Saskatoon, together with Justice but also other ministries including Social Services and Health, but also the education system and community agencies, all of these groups working together can provide some good services for the community. And I know that the Prince Albert COR has shown some very positive results. I know also that when the minister was in the city of Regina police force, she was working along with others in the Crime Prevention Council which are basically grandparents or great-grandparents of these kinds of initiatives.

So what we know in Saskatchewan, when you get resources into the right places, you're able to deal with some of the very difficult issues. And I'd like to thank the minister and the ministry for this good work. Thank you.

[14:30]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answers to questions 332 through 346.

The Speaker: — The Government Whip has ordered responses to questions 332 to 346.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 161 — *The Wildlife Amendment Act, 2014/Loi de 2014 modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur la faune*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After my brief remarks here today, I'll be moving a second reading for *The Wildlife Amendment Act, 2014*.

The proposed amendments considered today will clarify the licensing authority for scientific permits to ensure that wildlife research is conducted responsibly. It will also improve the legislative authority to manage vendor responsibility for hunting and angling issuance, and it will implement additional hunting suspensions to increase the protection of our wildlife resources here in Saskatchewan. It'll also lengthen the amount of time wildlife officers have to bring charges forward for wildlife violations.

Mr. Speaker, *The Wildlife Act, 1998* and associated regulations currently prescribe licensing provisions for scientific or research purposes that require the taking or disturbing of wildlife. Many research surveys, especially those involving species at risk, use non-obtrusive detection efforts such as monitoring songbirds, passive wildlife observation, or the use of presence/absence surveys. The Act and regulations don't speak to the authorization of these types of surveys. The proposed amendment will ensure these surveys are carried out in a responsible and undistruptive manner.

Our government has entered into an agreement to deliver the Saskatchewan automated hunting, angling, and trapping licence sales. Responsibility of this contractual agreement is authorized by *The Wildlife Act, 1998*. Currently, *The Wildlife Act, 1998* mandates the suspension of hunting privileges for most wildlife violations, including one-year suspensions from hunting or trapping. Individuals who are convicted of a wildlife offence are prohibited from purchasing a hunting or trapping . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order, on both sides of the House. The minister is trying to give a second reading speech and we have conversations going back and forth across the floor. Take them outside if you want to do that. I recognize the Minister for the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, currently *The Wildlife Act, 1998* mandates the suspension of hunting privileges for most wildlife violations. This includes one-year suspensions from hunting or from trapping. Individuals who are convicted of a wildlife offence are prohibited from purchasing a hunting or trapping licence for a period of one year from the date of their conviction.

A key message from hunters during the red tape reduction committee, which took place in the spring of 2012, was for government to do more to conserve our wildlife resource. Our government proposes to increase hunting suspensions to ensure that the most serious conservation offences will carry an automatic two-year suspension. People who fail to pay wildlife-related fines will be prohibited from buying a licence until their fines are paid, and individuals who are suspended from hunting activities in another jurisdiction will not be able to purchase a licence in the province of Saskatchewan. Those convicted on three separate occasions for wildlife offences, they will have a lifetime ban prohibiting the purchase of hunting licences.

Our government's new automated licence system will more effectively administer and deliver these hunting suspensions by electronically blocking a licence purchase. This automation

creates opportunities to co-operate with other agencies and other databases.

The final measure proposed to demonstrate commitment to protecting our resource is to lengthen the amount of time wildlife officers have to bring forward charges for wildlife violations. Wildlife violations are challenging to investigate because they often occur in unpopulated areas and often without a witness. In addition, poaching gangs are becoming more sophisticated and more difficult to catch, often requiring undercover operations to collect evidence to support prosecution. The proposed amendments will give officers an extended amount of time to investigate these violations more thoroughly.

This past spring our government made significant changes to the fine structure for unlawful hunting and fishing activities by doubling the fines for the most serious wildlife conservation offences. In doing so, Saskatchewan penalties are now equal to or slightly higher than the fines for comparable violations in other jurisdictions.

And finally, the Minister of Justice has advanced legislation that will deny persons who are in arrears for maintenance payments the opportunity to purchase a hunting or angling licence. This is an example of cross-jurisdiction potential of an automated licensing system.

These amendments to *The Wildlife Act* can be implemented without affecting existing First Nations and Métis hunting rights in our province and these changes will not add to resources or training needs for Saskatchewan's conservation officers.

Our government has consulted with and has the support of the provincial wildlife advisory committee and the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation. The proposed legislation before you demonstrates our government's commitment to protecting our wildlife resources. Equally it will send a strong message to poachers that there are serious consequences associated with breaking wildlife laws in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of *The Wildlife Amendment Act, 2014*.

The Speaker: — The minister has moved second reading of Bill No. 161, *The Wildlife Amendment Act, 2014*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And again I thank the government for an explanation as to what Bill 161 entails. And, Mr. Speaker, this is a bill that we're going to pay a lot of attention to for a very long time. The fact of the matter, Mr. Speaker, is that this bill itself has a lot of issues that I want to certainly express at the outset in terms of what we envision, you know, within the NDP opposition, and certainly myself as a northern MLA as to what we think is important when we talk about wildlife management and the different players that are impacted and the different demands and needs that we have on our natural environment, and of course on the wildlife as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's really, really important that when there are discussions and issues around wildlife management, there are so many different demands on our wildlife and on our lands, Mr. Speaker, that it's very, very important that we pay attention. So one of the things that's really, really key on this particular bill, Mr. Speaker, is that obviously from the NDP perspective as an opposition, we don't support the notion that poaching and selling animal parts is something that we should tolerate. It's not something that we should be soft on, Mr. Speaker. There's no question that a lot of people in Saskatchewan frown on that particular activity.

So we would want to make sure that the intent of the bill is exactly that, is to make sure that those that are perpetuating illegal use of animal parts by selling them and harvesting animals, that they are actually prosecuted to the full extent of the law. And I want to say that at the outset, Mr. Speaker, because obviously that needs to be said. And this particular bill — seeing that this is the first opportunity for us as an opposition, Mr. Speaker, to see the bill — that we want to make sure that people out there know where we stand on the whole notion of poaching. And where we may disagree on occasion, Mr. Speaker, from the government is how we best implement that and how we best evaluate their proposals as indicated on Bill 161 as to how they wish to achieve that.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have a lot of issues that I want to speak about. The first particular item I want to pay a little bit of attention to is on the aspect of this bill where the minister has indicated that this bill requires scientists studying animals to get a licence from the government. And I'm assuming when they say a licence from the government, they're talking about the provincial government. I'm not sure if there's collaboration from the federal government. Obviously there is a federal government role as well if we look at the, as an example, one of the departments that is very prevalent in Saskatchewan is the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. They obviously have some permit and licensing laws that probably many scientists and many different people that may be involved with studying of animals, they probably have their own rules and regulations on how to license that.

So I guess my first question is, obviously we would assume that when a minister speaks of Bill 161 in terms of getting a licence to study animals, that he is making a reference to not only the provincial government, that there is some collaboration and corroboration with the federal government as well when we're talking about licensing for studying of any animals in Saskatchewan. And one would assume that there is that collaboration and co-operation between the two levels of government. So for everybody's sake I'm going to assume that there is that collaboration between the provincial and federal governments when the minister makes the comment that the people that are studying animals now must get a licence from the government, and the government being both the provincial government and the federal government. So I hope there was consultation done on that particular aspect of the bill.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that gets me to the point of the actual study of the animals. I'm not certain how many different organizations and how many different veterinarians or people that may be involved with the Wildlife Federation or the wildlife advisory committee or different organizations or

different groups or different people of interest . . . The whole question is who exactly is studying the animals, Mr. Speaker. The bill doesn't identify that, as to why this requirement is coming forward. I'm assuming it is to make sure that there is some rhyme and reason as to how you would control the study of animals because obviously there is a need to know who's doing what out there.

So some of the first questions we have as a result of this particular bill is, who is taking an interest in the study of animals and, more so, what animals are being studied? This is I think one of the key questions that we have on this particular bill because the different animals that are being studied, everything from aquatic life to caribou management, you know, to fish being found on different lakes that are floating on the surface, like who actually collects these specimens and these, whether it's fish or wildlife, and who actually has an interest in dissecting these animals that are found dead or found floating in the water?

These are some of the questions that we have instinctively. Is it the universities? Is it veterinarians? Is it people involved with the outfitting industry? Is it government scientists? Like it's very difficult to figure out who exactly is studying some of these animals. And these are some of the questions that I have at the outset is, what is the purpose of the requirement now by this bill to have these people that are studying animals, you know, that they now be licensed?

Well the first question we have is, who's doing all the studies? And, Mr. Speaker, I don't know if the ministry itself directs different players out there to do the investigation. Say as an example, if they got a report from some provincial park that there's a bunch of fish floating on the lake, does the department or does SERM [Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management] come along and say okay, well we want them studied? Why did they die? Who would they ask to do the study? And I'm assuming that the universities are involved or there is a veterinary association that would be able to do that. Or is it the private sector?

So this is what's really important, Mr. Speaker, is the government has the data. They have the information. They generally have an idea as to who's studying animals in Saskatchewan. They are now saying that they have to be licensed to be able to study these animals. And our first question is, who are some of these organizations that have been involved with the study, and what exactly is their history? And what animals are they studying? And what's the purpose of some of the study? What are some of the concerns as a result of the study?

So you can see there's a lot of different information that we would require to ensure that we completely understand the bill and this component of being able to study, or to regulate the people that study your animals.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I know from experience that in the Far North that there is the caribou management association and group that have really paid a lot of attention to, you know, the caribou health. The herd is something that obviously they're concerned about, and there's a collaboration amongst a number of organizations and provinces. I know Alberta's involved. I

believe the territories are involved, as well as the Nunavut and Saskatchewan and some of the northern Manitoba bands. So there is a number of organizations that really monitor the caribou herd and the caribou health.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I know that we were funding the caribou management team for a number of years, and I believe that the fund itself is still intact today. And I know they obviously have asked for more help and, you know, and the resources attached to that. So as the caribou management herd themselves begin to look at the health of the herd itself, would they be considered part of the study group? These are some of the things that we need to find out as a result of this bill.

[14:45]

This is really, really important because once you find out who's studying your animals, it gives you a better perspective, Mr. Speaker, a better perspective of how different organizations are impacted and want to find out how our animals' health is doing overall. So we need to know those organizations.

And once you have the organizations identified, Mr. Speaker, then you need to go dig even further. Like what animals are they studying and for what purposes, and are they being directed to study the health of the animal from some special interest group? And the example I would use is, obviously if you look at the caribou management herd, there may be companies and corporations in northern Saskatchewan that have an interest. When you want to establish a mine or they want to explore for oil or gas, does this affect or impact the travels of the caribou herd?

These are some of the issues and some of the really important questions that we need to ask. And that's why I think licensing of those that study our animals is probably important in a sense that at the very least the government knows who are doing the study and who is being involved and who is paying for the study. And what are they studying, and what are they studying that particular species of wildlife or fish for? These are all the questions that we in particular have, Mr. Speaker, when we look at that particular aspect.

The other issue I think is also important in this particular bill is, as you'd study the animals, does that include the study of the flora and fauna, Mr. Speaker? This is what we have to, you know, determine as well is if you're going to study animals, do you study the environment around that animal? Is that all part of or inclusive of the study itself?

Well again it gets very complicated here, Mr. Speaker, in a sense of . . . You see when you start evaluating and monitoring the ecosystem health attached to the study of one particular animal, it can become very complex. It can become very complicated. It can become very time consuming and it become for a period of a long time in which the study is going to occur. So we're not just talking about taking samples of fish in a lake. We're not just talking about a one-month migration pattern for the caribou, Mr. Speaker. This is a very complex and very complicated process.

The bill itself, Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned at the outset, it's really important that we look at the bill and we begin to dissect

each and every line because, Mr. Speaker, if we don't do that, then obviously we're doing an injustice to the work that many scientists and people that are concerned about the conservation of wildlife in natural spaces, well we would be doing them a disservice, and that's something that we should not do, Mr. Speaker.

So again on the issue of identifying who's studying the animals, is there a connection to those that are studying what animals and for what? Is there also a corresponding effort to try and study the natural ecosystem around those animals, as I mentioned the flora and the fauna of different ecosystems of our province, Mr. Speaker?

And then it begs the next question. If you're studying the animals, do you also study the water which the animals are consuming? And that's another thing that's also quite important, Mr. Speaker, the health of our water system overall, like the overall quality of our water, the ability to drink some of the water. What's in our water today? As we all hear about global warming, Mr. Speaker, we all hear about the changing weather patterns and all the dangers attached to the greenhouse gas emissions, one begins to ask the question: how's our water quality? Is that having an effect on the fish? Is it having an effect on the ducks? Is it having an effect on the moose that do drink the water? How's it affecting the ecosystem overall, Mr. Speaker?

And then you ask the question about air quality. Again, are the people doing these studies, are they impacted with . . . Are they doing some of the air quality measurements necessary for the study of these animals?

So from my perspective on one particular line, you look at the study of animals and being able to license those that want to study the animals in Saskatchewan as attached to Bill 161. This is a really complicated bill. It goes a long ways in terms of what some people want to understand. It goes a long ways into talking about animals' health. But does it give us the specifics as to who is studying the animals, for what reason, and who is paying for that study?

And the second part of the bill, Mr. Speaker, it's really important that we pay attention to . . . or the second part of our critique of the bill is that are we also looking at the effect of the animals themselves when it comes to air quality, water quality, ecosystem health, flora and fauna health? The list goes on as to how these animals are part of the natural ecosystem. And if we're just studying one component of the ecosystem, are we doing an injustice to all the other components? Now the reason why I say that, Mr. Speaker, is that as you look at Bill 161, again the regulation of who's studying animals, you have to really begin to ask the question, and this is where I want to spend a bit of time, is on, who is studying what and for what purposes?

Now I'll give you an example that I think is really, really important. A number of elders in my constituency often talk about animal health. Many of them have lived in the North. They've fished and trapped and they've hunted and they've gathered things like berries and so on and so forth for years and years. And many of the elders noticed a change in the wildlife. They've noticed change in the ecosystem. They've noticed a

change of how the world seems to operate, and many of them are frightened by it and concerned about it as well. So we need to begin to ask the elders themselves, what do you see as a direct challenge? So if the elders become involved in identifying the study of animals and thereby the study of the ecosystem, have they been consulted? Have they been involved and engaged in this, in the drafting of this bill?

And that's why I think it's really important we don't just take one particular aspect of the bill and concentrate on that. There are many moving parts and many people that are very concerned about the ecosystem generally from all walks of life. Northern Saskatchewan is no different when it comes to them or the people of northern Saskatchewan wanting to be engaged in these particular studies. We are not taking enough time nor are we paying any attention to their input and their concerns, Mr. Speaker. Because you hear a lot about the ecosystem health from the older people in my constituency. They see a lot of changes, and they've expressed those changes to me, Mr. Speaker.

And they wouldn't mind some explanation, when you start studying the animals themselves. And this is why I think it is with a lot of interest that we're going to pay attention to who is actually studying the animal and why, all of a sudden is the government now coming along and saying, we're going to begin to regulate the studying of animals and we're going to want to be able to license people to do that?

So what we're assuming, Mr. Speaker, is that the study of animals isn't restricted to just the animal. We're obviously hoping that there'd be a lot of studies linked to the natural ecosystem that the animal inhabited or inhabits. And that's why it's really important, Mr. Speaker, that you look at water quality, air quality, flora and fauna quality, and in general ecosystem health of that particular animal that is being studied.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have always determined, and many older people have told me that in the North that they are concerned about the ecosystem health overall and the effect it's having on animals, and the effect that it's having not just on animal movement, but animal health as well. Many of the elders in the Dillon area, or as many would say the Buffalo River First Nations area and that includes St. George's Hill and a number of other smaller communities around Dillon, Mr. Speaker, they often talk about weather patterns and the westerly winds. And many of the older people talk about some of the issues that they see on their particular land, and a number of them have really questioned the air quality and water quality of their region because of the activity happening at the Fort McMurray oil sands. And, Mr. Speaker, many of the elders believe that all that activity of the billions of dollars investment into the Alberta tar sands, that it is having a negative effect on the land and the air quality and the water quality of northwestern Saskatchewan.

Elders have brought this up on a continual basis and they've been asking, what is the government doing to protect the land? Who's studying all this particular information? Is there anybody out there collecting data? And, Mr. Speaker, the unfortunate answer that I give them, that I'm not aware of anybody doing that particular work. And now we look at the licensing that is necessary for Bill 161. It will give us some indication as to who's taking an interest on our land from the research

perspective and, Mr. Speaker, that's something that many elders in my particular area want to know.

One of the elders mentioned to me, Mr. Speaker, that he doesn't eat as many ducks as he once did because some of the things that he's seeing, that he has seen over time, in terms of the quality of the ducks that he is now harvesting, that he finds that some of the ducks are odd shaped. Some of them have some weird growth in their body. So a lot of times they won't eat some of the ducks that they do harvest because it appears that this is not a very healthy animal. So they don't consume it because it's all part of the food chain.

So they look at some of these things, and when they find abnormalities within the animal health, whether it's a duck or a fish or a moose or deer, where do they go for that kind of help to find out what caused the particular abnormality in that particular animal? There is no venue for many of the people that come across some of these animals. And they are very, very curious, Mr. Speaker, as to why some of these animals are suffering from certain ailments that are not normally in their system overall, so a lot of them begin to speculate.

And a number of elders from the Dillon area and Buffalo Narrows area often tell me that we're not paying close attention to what is being deposited on the land and on the animals and on our water system from the Fort McMurray tar sands activity. And, Mr. Speaker, there's nothing of that sort happening, and this is one of the reasons why we have constantly and will continually call the provincial Government of Saskatchewan to do a baseline study of what is being deposited on our lands in northwestern Saskatchewan from the Alberta tar sands project located in and around the Fort McMurray area.

So I think, Mr. Speaker, as long as we continue talking about those that are studying our animal health, we have to begin to pay attention on not just the animal health but all the connecting ecosystems, support systems that are out there, whether it's air quality, water quality, and flora and fauna quality, Mr. Speaker. So you look at the connectivity of animals on their habitat, Mr. Speaker, and then you look at the environmental pressures on that animal in that habitat, and then you look at the harvesting pressures, Mr. Speaker. To be able to manage all the demands on our wildlife, Mr. Speaker, province-wide, is a very complex and very trying and difficult task.

And often people in Saskatchewan, many of them like to have their perspective understood. And we can appreciate that, but when you have to listen to 10 different demands on your wildlife from 20 different perspectives and from 30 different regions, it becomes a very complicated situation, Mr. Speaker. And that's why when you look at the external factors on animal health, you have to also look on the harvesting pressure on those animal numbers to be able to understand exactly the amount of pressure that our natural ecosystem is under on a continual basis.

So, Mr. Speaker, going back again to some of the discussions we've had with the older people in my particular area, we talk about the pressures on the natural ecosystem and what is happening.

Now one of the older people in Dillon told me one day, you

know we're not monitoring what is being deposited on our lands from, you know, from the Alberta tar sands project. We get their wind because the wind, it's a westerly wind. So any activity and pollution that is created on the Fort McMurray activity, Mr. Speaker, the westerly winds will bring that pollution towards our lands and our people, is what he said. And that's exactly true. The plume of influence, as some people like to use the phrase, Mr. Speaker, it is now hitting northwestern Saskatchewan.

And many of the people, especially the elders out there, they notice the change in the land, and they're asking the governments to be responsible and to begin to investigate that. Now does the government investigate themselves, and would they be one of the people that they have to license their own activity? These are some of the questions we have on Bill 161, and it's really, really important that we do that.

So without any scientific research, without any help, any technical help, or university-trained people's help, many elders are frustrated when they say to me that we know that there is a threat to our ecosystem health from the Fort McMurray tar sands activity and yet nobody seems to be doing anything about that. Can somebody study that? Can somebody study the animal health to see if they are being impacted by all the pollution and all the particles being dropped on our land from the oil sands activity in and around northeastern Alberta?

[15:00]

Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't have those questions because obviously we need to have that support mechanism in place. And if this is what the government is proposing through this bill, then we need to know who the contact people are, how much will they be involved with this particular issue. And will they be available to the people of the northwest to answer questions or to be able to direct inquiries or to even do studies on animals found in the forest that may have been impacted negatively by this activity?

So people that are listening at home will begin to ask the question, well if Fort McMurray is doing well, the tar sands are generating billions of dollars for profits for the oil and gas company, Mr. Speaker, and they have all this activity happening there, who is monitoring the westerly winds that we get in northwestern Saskatchewan from Fort McMurray? Who gets all that pollution, is the people of the Dillon area, of the Buffalo Narrows area, and of course of other areas that surround the Buffalo River First Nation.

Now we know that the plume of influence, as some of the scientists like to make reference to, is that that plume is getting bigger and bigger and bigger. As the activity continues, Mr. Speaker, certain areas get hit harder than others. But quite frankly, the plume of influence is getting bigger and bigger in the sense that all that oil and gas activity is creating a strain on the natural ecosystem of northwestern Saskatchewan. And nobody's paying attention to it at all.

Now what we've been calling for, and this is where I hope Bill 161 does indeed address this particular issue, does have the ways and means to direct the different interests that are out there to be able to check whether this activity in the oil sands is

impacting and affecting the natural habitat of northwestern Saskatchewan, and what exactly are they depositing. What exactly are they depositing on the land and on the fish and the wildlife in the water in that particular area? We need to study that, Mr. Speaker. And if this bill talks about that particular study, then we should take the time to study this thoroughly and not just limit it to the particular species of animal but to the activity surrounding the ecosystem health and the actual ecosystem itself, Mr. Speaker.

So we would suggest today, we would suggest today in order for this bill to have merit — in particular this particular section of the bill where they talk about licensing of those that are studying animals to know who's doing what out there — that we need to expand that provision. If that consultation that we speak about within the NDP opposition involves a wide variety of people, not just two or three groups because the health and study of animals and thus the ecosystem of our land involves many, many people, it doesn't just involve one or two organizations. It involves many, many people and many, many layers of people that utilize not only the wildlife but all the resources on some of these lands. So we need to make sure that we're inclusive and that we're very, very open and transparent and accountable to those people that are being impacted by laws of this sort to make sure that they are involved, that they do have a say.

And many of the elders in northwestern Saskatchewan are crying out very loud that they want to be engaged in this. They want to know what's going on, and they want to make sure that some of their issues that they bring up are being handled as seriously as they should be. And, Mr. Speaker, that's one of the most important messages that I have around Bill 161 when you talk about the study of animals and thus, I hope, the study of the ecosystems throughout Saskatchewan, and in particular northwestern Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the Minister of the Environment one thing very, very clear today is that we have been asking in northwestern Saskatchewan for a baseline study, a baseline study of what the Fort McMurray tar sands are depositing on our land in terms of pollutants as a result of their activity. And if we don't do the baseline study, we don't begin to monitor the animal health nor the flora and fauna health nor the water quality study nor the air quality study that's necessary, and the longer we put it off, the less and less opportunity that we will have to hold the companies, the oil and gas companies, accountable for all the pollution that they're putting on our Saskatchewan lands, Mr. Speaker, that they're putting in our Saskatchewan lakes and rivers, that they're putting on our forests, and that they're putting on our animal health, Mr. Speaker.

We need to make sure that that study is done right away, and we need to make sure that it's done with earnest. And we need to ensure that the people that live in the area are also actively involved with the scientists and with the different interest groups that may be studying animal health and ecosystem health in any part of Saskatchewan. And I made reference in this particular discussion on the northwestern part of our province.

So, Mr. Speaker, one of the gentlemen who I've had a great

amount of respect for over my years was a person that worked in the fire suppression program. And he lived just outside of Dillon; his name was Henry LaPlante. And Mr. LaPlante was, he was the mayor of his home community at one time, and he was also somebody that was very active in fishing and trapping and hunting. Henry taught his boys how to survive in the bush, and he really spent a lot of quality time with his family. And he took his job as a fire suppression officer very seriously. He was there every year. He worked very hard, Mr. Speaker. And when he had issues that needed to be addressed, he would actually bring those issues forward. I can remember when I was the mayor of Ile-a-la-Crosse, he would actually come and explain things to many of the mayors that are sitting around the table as to what he foresaw as issues that we need to be concerned about 20 years ago, Mr. Speaker.

And today, now Mr. LaPlante, rest his soul, has left us. But I remember him one day distinctly telling us, when it comes to the Fort McMurray oil and gas activity, when it comes to all the exploration and the billions of dollars that are being generated for the oil and gas companies in that particular area, we are having a negative environmental effect on our land.

And one of the things that he would say is that he would go up on a tower, and a number of people that he worked with would tell him that when he cleaned out the windshield or the window in that particular tower in the morning, he would actually come up with some grimy, greasy cover on, you know, on the actual windows themselves. Because obviously when you're in a fire tower, you have to monitor a large area. And when he went there in the mornings to do his job and to work with other people that were in the fire watch program, they would have to clean the windows on a regular basis because these windows had almost like a soot-like, tar-like substance on them. And, Mr. Speaker, he knew that that came from the Fort McMurray oil activity.

He knew then and that's what his biggest argument was 20-some years ago, is let's get a baseline study now so 20 years from now we can actually quantify, we can quantify the damage created to the northern ecosystem as a result of some of the neighbouring activities or the neighbouring province's oil and gas activity. And if we can quantify that activity, Mr. Speaker, if we can quantify that activity, would it not then justify some legal ramification to clean up that mess being dumped on northern Saskatchewan land from that activity around Fort McMurray, Mr. Speaker? And that was his point 20-some years ago.

And that's one of the issues, I think, are really relevant today to the minister, to the minister today when he talks about studying of animals, that this is not something that he simply takes lightly and assume that there's five or six different organizations that might want to study animals. We need to make sure it's broad, it's encompassing, and above all else that it's inclusive of many, many people that are concerned about that because many, many people count on our wildlife and our natural ecosystems to be able to survive for the years to come.

So one of the things that we often speak about, Mr. Speaker, in northwestern Saskatchewan, is when is that baseline study going to be commissioned so that we can again hold to account those that are polluting our land and those that are making great

profit, great profit on their activity and yet refuse to pay the cost to remediate that pollution on our lands? Every single day that goes by, that activity in Fort McMurray continues, and the pollution of northwestern Saskatchewan will continue to accumulate until this government has enough courage to begin that work, as the elders have indicated they should do, to begin to monitor that activity on our northern lands, lakes, and forests, Mr. Speaker.

So my point today, my point today on the licensing aspect: that somewhere along the line when we talk about licensing, that the Government of Saskatchewan, in particular this Minister of the Environment, take his job seriously and say, as a result of this provision of being able to license those that are studying animals, we are going to put in some parameters that they also have to follow. They should begin to monitor some of these animals that they're studying for any kind of pollution that may be associated with the Fort McMurray oil activity.

They should also make a provision that they would undertake the study of flora and fauna health. They, the government, would undertake the study of water quality, Mr. Speaker, that they'd make the effort to study the air quality. Because some of the points that Mr. LaPlante raised is that if we let them do this, then 20 years from now we would not know where we began with in terms of what was there then and what is there now because they'll have 23 years allowed to accumulate all that pollution on our lands and lakes. And that'll have a negative effect on animal health, on water quality, and air quality as well.

So Henry knew this 25, 30 years ago. He tried to educate young people about that, but not many people listened, and not too many people paid attention, Mr. Speaker. So I think it's important that as we look at the study of animals, it opens a wide variety of responsibility in what we think on the NDP side is something that's long overdue.

If we're studying animal health and we want to monitor those that are studying animal health through this bill, Bill 161, then we should be inclusive of engaging all the people and making sure that the studies that are being undertaken on these animals is far reaching, very encompassing, and very thorough in the sense of studying all the ecosystem, not just a single species of a single area on a single time frame. It doesn't work that way, Mr. Speaker. It's much more complicated, much more complex, and we need to pay attention to that particular challenge.

Now I'll go back to the Fort McMurray oil sands activity or tar sands activity, whatever the case may be. We know that they're making billions and billions of dollars, Mr. Speaker, from the sale of oil and gas. And, Mr. Speaker, we're also seeing that there's a lot of discussion on a number of pipelines that people are concerned about. Whether it goes to Kitimat, BC or whether it goes to the States or whether it goes to Eastern Canada first, all these discussions on how we get the Alberta oil to market, that's been the fundamental argument we see in the news today.

And yet it seems nobody's speaking up for a part of the province of Saskatchewan that is paying the highest price, the highest price ever on the degradation of their lands as a result of the activity in oil and gas. Now if this minister wants to be serious about his roles and his responsibility as Minister of the

Environment, then I think he needs to begin to research whether the Alberta government or whether some of the oil and gas companies in Alberta that are contributing to the degradation of our ecosystem in northwestern Saskatchewan, whether they have an environmental fund set up, an environmental fund set up and money collecting there to remediate the pollution that they're putting on our land year after year after year after year.

[15:15]

And, Mr. Speaker, one would assume, given today's environmental awareness — and I'm sure that this is a constant point in discussion amongst the senior members of the bureaucratic team — that when do we begin to do the baseline study? How do we hold Alberta's feet to the fire? And do we have an argument, do we have an argument today that would position us as a province of Saskatchewan a lot better, a lot better in holding the companies in Alberta responsible for depositing pollutants on our land as a result of the Fort McMurray activity?

Now, Mr. Speaker, the premise of how we want to hold companies responsible is all encompassing under SERM's legislation when it says the polluter pays, the polluter pays. So if somebody's been creating the problem in the environment, then the premise of the polluter pays should stand.

And I can remember our discussions, Mr. Speaker, around the Uranium City mines, Mr. Speaker, and I think Lorado was one mine and Gunnar was another mine and Beaverlodge was another mine. All these mines around the Uranium City area, Mr. Speaker, were mines that were left as they were. And all of a sudden SERM began investigating the activities of some of the mines in the sense of they simply boarded up the mines, and they left everything as they were, and then the companies kind of scooted off.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if memory serves me correct, the province of Saskatchewan, the NDP government at the time worked very closely with NRC Canada, Natural Resources Canada, and at the time I believe the minister was Mr. Goodale who was an MP [Member of Parliament] from Saskatchewan. Well NRC Canada [Natural Resources Canada] and Saskatchewan Environment began working on a joint project, and their joint project was simply because the Gunnar and the mines that were operating out there, Lorado, they were operating under a federal Crown corporation, I believe, Eldorado Nuclear, and all the federal laws applied to that particular federal Crown corporation.

So during our discussions with them, we said, well why doesn't the provincial government and the federal government contribute to a central fund, and we would work with you to begin to clean up all the abandoned uranium mines around Uranium City? Because these mines are not only dangerous to go to, but they also pose a tremendous environmental risk to the wildlife, to the local people, and to the ecosystem health. So these discussions went on and on for a couple of years, but we were bound and determined at the time to make sure that Uranium City's area was cleaned up — Gunnar and Lorado mines, Beaverlodge, and a bunch of smaller mines, gold mines that scattered — the entire area.

So at the end of the day we agreed. And I think at the time it

was a \$36 million project with Saskatchewan I think contributing 12 million and the balance coming from the federal government. And we were moving our way forward.

At the times of the discussions on this particular project, Mr. Speaker, we knew that the \$30-some million that were identified was not going to be enough. We knew that, but we knew that it would be a first step in ensuring that, at the very least, there's an effort to hold the parties that were responsible for these mines, to hold them to account, Mr. Speaker. That's what we wanted to do.

And at the time, the provincial government rose to the occasion. The federal government through Natural Resources Canada, NRCan, also rose to the occasion because these . . . I think it was Gunnar that was actually a federal Crown corporation project, and they came to the table and said, yes, those are our sites and we did operate these sites, you know, as a federal Crown corporation, so we're responsible as well. So we engaged the federal government on that project. And, Mr. Speaker, it took a lot of discussion, negotiation, and some pushing and prodding, but finally the federal government came to the table, and now you see, Mr. Speaker, now you see activity in and around the Athabasca Basin that's actually beginning to resolve and to address the abandoned uranium mines that were around for 20 years and nobody doing a thing about it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there's two other companies that we actually also engaged. And we engaged these companies from the perspective of saying, well look, we have this provision in our laws that say polluter pays, so either you guys join this effort or we'll just simply, we'll just work our way to pressuring you to do so. And, Mr. Speaker, the companies took a responsible position. Cameco assumed ownership of Beaverlodge, which is another mine site. They operated under their previous company many years ago, but Cameco took responsibility, and they began joining the process and joining this effort.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I really want to commend the SERM at the time, the SERM bureaucrats for is that they worked very hard on this project. And they found one particular mine, and I can't remember the name of the mine, but they'd done a corporate search of this mine, and then they found out that this company actually transitioned out of uranium and into oil and gas. And I don't remember the company's name offhand, so I'm not going to try and hazard a guess here.

But, Mr. Speaker, this particular company, we approached them and they agreed. They changed their name, obviously. They changed their location, and they also changed their activity. But after we sat down and we discussed this project with them, they came along and said, yes, it's a responsible thing to do; we would agree to be part of this. Because obviously nobody wants to be viewed as a company that left an abandoned mine somewhere that was posing environmental risk to not only the ecosystem but to the people that lived in and around their mine, Mr. Speaker.

So as a result of that today, clearly 20 years later, we're seeing activities that are beginning to address and remediate some of

the sites that some of these companies had operated, some of the uranium mines at around Uranium City. Mr. Speaker, this type of effort takes a lot of work. And that's why today, you know, I can tell people as a former minister of Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management that we had a great team and, Mr. Speaker, they worked very hard, and they brought this particular project to fruition.

And when the time came for the province of Saskatchewan to put their contribution in towards protecting the environmental health of animals, protecting the public health of people, and ensuring that the ecosystem health was going to be restored as best as possible, Mr. Speaker, we made, they made it, the bureaucrats in the province of Saskatchewan together made this a reality, and today we see the activity happening around some of these mines that were abandoned for years and years.

Now, Mr. Speaker, how much longer we have, as an update, Mr. Speaker, how much longer we have to clean up some of these mines certainly remains an open question. We know that SRC, the Saskatchewan Research Council, have been engaged. We understand a number of companies . . . I think Nuna is also involved. And the last time I was up in the Far North a couple of months ago, we took a tour of a few of the sites that have been fixed up, Mr. Speaker. There still remains a lot of work attached to those projects, but at the very least the work has started and it's continued. Progress is being made, but there's much more work that needs to be done, and we understood all of that. We understood all of that, Mr. Speaker. And there is still a lot of different issues that have to be addressed, but at the very least that project is moving forward.

And that's exactly my point around Bill 161, that you've got to have an encompassing, an all-encompassing process when you start talking about studying animal health. It doesn't necessarily mean you study one fish caught in one pond in one month by one person. Mr. Speaker, it is a very, very complex ecosystem that we're trying to manage, and you have to look at all aspects of that ecosystem and how to correct it and how to engage people properly and get the parties that created the problem in the first place to come forward and accept responsibility to remediate that land that they had some negative effects on in previous years so that they can correct their actions in the past and thereby achieve a good public relations coup, so to speak, Mr. Speaker.

And that's my point today about the Fort McMurray oil activity, Mr. Speaker, that this kind of monitoring of the pollution that northwestern Saskatchewan gets has not been done. And if we look at some of the issues, Mr. Speaker, and the Minister of the Economy is chirping from his chair, Mr. Speaker. He needs to start standing up for the people of Saskatchewan instead of big oil and gas companies from other jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker. He may talk about five little monitoring stations to see what the effects are on our water but, Mr. Speaker, my point exactly is he is not doing enough. He's underperforming when it comes to the protection of the environment. On a continual basis, he underperforms.

So my argument today is that if you're going to study animal health and begin to license those that are studying animal health, then the government needs to take a big mirror and have a look at themselves and saying, we should get involved with

studying animal health and not just restrict our study to animal health but to be inclusive of what it affects that are creating stress on the animal health, which is the ecosystem challenges that are out there, and to begin to hold those at account, hold those that are responsible to account to come along and be part of the solution as was practised a number of years ago under the NDP administration, Mr. Speaker.

So Bill 161, on one particular aspect of requiring licences for scientists that are studying animals, Mr. Speaker, there are three basic comments that we wish to make. Number one is we want to know who is studying the animals. Who is paying for that study? And foremost, Mr. Speaker, what animals and what ecosystem are they studying? That's the first list of questions that we have.

The second point I want to make is that, how many other organizations are being excluded? We would like the list of organizations that have been consulted on this bill. Yes, I fully respect the Wildlife Federation. Yes, I fully respect the wildlife advisory committee, Mr. Speaker. These are good Saskatchewan people that come from all walks of life, and they do a great service to their province.

However, Mr. Speaker, we need to be inclusive of other groups that could add to the solutions when it comes to our environmental performance as a government and as a province. And some of those groups that need to be involved, Mr. Speaker, are trappers, fishermen, people that live off the land, Mr. Speaker, people that are involved with the green movement in general, people that sometimes you don't like their opinions being expressed. We may not agree, but at least they have a lot to contribute.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think we need to involve these people immediately and to make sure that they have what I think is important: they have the opportunity to participate.

So the first point is, who is studying? The second point, be more inclusive. And the third point I want to make, as I mentioned at the outset, is that we've got to start holding those that pollute and destroy our wildlife or our animals and our land, we need to hold them to account better and stronger. And that's why today once again I'm encouraging that minister and that government to try and begin to work on a baseline study now and not wait another 20 years and let the oil and gas companies in Alberta continue dumping pollutants on our land and not being held to account.

And people will say, well what's the baseline study? What's this dumping? How do we get all this information to the public? Well that's exactly the other point that I raise in this bill, Mr. Speaker, is the government should be doing some of this work on their own because, as I mentioned, Mr. . . . or Henry, when he mentioned to us many, many years ago is the oil and gas companies drop pollutants on our land and over time those pollutants build up, and then if you don't do a baseline study now, it'll keep building up. Then we finally get the action point where we're studying it, they would have gotten away with 20, 30 years of dumping pollution on our land without being held legally responsible for it. Then how do we get them to clean it up? That was his point 20 years ago. And today now I want to say thank you to Mr. LaPlante for giving us that vision and that

concern and that point many years ago. And, Mr. Speaker, it's never too late to begin that process.

So one of the things I would tell the minister is that when you want to study animals, be inclusive of many, many other organizations. Number two, you study the entire ecosystem health, not just the animal on a one-off. And number three, if you find evidence of pollution, which I think you should ask for when people study these animals, then let's go after the ones that are polluting the animals and the wildlife and the ecosystem and get them to reclaim those areas. And, Mr. Speaker, I think that's really, really important we begin that type of work.

[15:30]

So we've said a lot about that, the provision about the study of animals. We're going to pay very, very close attention to this. We would encourage those that are involved with the study of animals to share information with the public. There's nothing wrong with sharing information on the health of our animals. And I know that the caribou management herd does share a lot of information. I know that this joint committee studies caribou health. They do consult with the elders in the Athabasca Basin. They do consult with the leadership. They do consult with the people that harvest the elk, Mr. Speaker, or the caribou. So it's important to take a lesson from them as to how to be inclusive and how to really communicate well with people.

So under this bill, if they get the provision to license this bill, we want to know . . . or they have to license the people studying, we want to know who they are and what they're up to.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to shift gears a bit to the second part of the particular bill that talks about updates to reflect the fact that licensing for hunting has been outsourced to a single electronic vendor, Mr. Speaker. Now I want to make sure that people out in Saskatchewan know this: that this government came along and they . . .

We always are critical of the government of trying to outsource services and privatize the Crowns, Mr. Speaker. They done a great job, they done a great job on things like right now the liquor store debate that's out there in the public. And they want to get rid of the liquor stores, Mr. Speaker. And that's one of their processes is to diminish the earning capacity and to diminish their importance so they can actually begin to see the sale of liquor happen in stores and in confectioneries, Mr. Speaker.

The other Crown corporation that they did sell off, Mr. Speaker, is Information Services Corporation, the same corporation that made 15 or \$16 million a year for the province. Well this particular government is selling that Crown corporation. So now we come along, and we argue as an opposition that the sale of some of these Crowns is not acceptable to the people of Saskatchewan, and you've got to stop privatizing services. And that goes back to the bill, Bill 161, Mr. Speaker, another example of how they've taken the ability of many people to sell licences at the confectionery stores and the different offices in the province of Saskatchewan.

So what gets us quite upset, Mr. Speaker, is on one hand this

government comes along says, yes, you can sell liquor now in any store and confectionery, but to buy a hunting licence or a fishing licence, you've got to get a hold of a company in Tennessee, I think. I think it's Tennessee. Somewhere in the States, Mr. Speaker. And that's going to . . . You know, that's the only place that you can buy a licence now, Mr. Speaker.

And some of the places in northern Saskatchewan, some of the companies are kind of shaking their head because they had the ability to be able to buy some of these licences, Mr. Speaker, from some of the stores and some of the vendors throughout northern Saskatchewan. Well now what happens, the provincial government single-sources issue of licensing to a company in the States. And they took away the opportunity, they took away the opportunity for some of these local vendors and some of these local businesses to sell licences to local people which is really convenient for, an example, the outfitting industry. Well they took away the ability for some of these vendors and these small businesses to issue licences, and they gave the responsibility to an American-based company in Tennessee to be able to do all the licensing permits issuance out of the States. But then they turn around and they're saying, well you guys can sell liquor now in your store, but you can't sell your fishing licence. So we're sitting there saying, well what's all that about? You know, how does that make any, any sense?

So that's one of the reasons why in opposition we look at the Saskatchewan Party, and they've underperformed. They've got their priorities wrong, Mr. Speaker, and they're very . . . They're one unsuccessful government in terms of being able to take advantage of all the great wealth that was handed to them to make a really lasting difference for the people of Saskatchewan. And this is what we say on this side of the House is really, really getting their priorities all confused and certainly mixed up, Mr. Speaker.

So it is frustrating to a lot of the local, some of the local businesses in the North. And I look at the outfitting industry themselves . . . [inaudible] . . . operate some of these really high-priced or high-cost operations, where they come back to this government and they've got to pay higher prices to get permits and licences from companies they used to be able to walk down the street from and get them. Now they've got to phone online to a company . . . or apply online to a company based in the States because the Saskatchewan Party government thought that was the best way to administer hunting licences from a different country many, many miles away.

And then all of a sudden the frustration was getting so strong, Mr. Speaker, that the former minister said, we've got to do something to correct this problem because we're getting outfitters and some of the vendors out there are getting mad because we had this new process we put in place. And some guy at the cabinet table said, I know; we'll let them sell liquor there. Maybe that'll solve the problem.

So, Mr. Speaker, we sit on this side of the House and we say, gee, these guys are driven by their ideology. No common sense, no plan, and certainly they have underperformed at the expense of Saskatchewan people. And from our perspective, Mr. Speaker, this is yet another example of how government has lost its way. And mind you, if you'd been in opposition for 16 years, to try and be government and perform at your peak level,

it takes a long time to do that. Mr. Speaker, we've seen no evidence that they have achieved that in any way, shape, or form.

So once again, Mr. Speaker, I would point this out, that when you outsource, when you outsource a basic service, when you outsource a basic service of issuing business . . . or a licence and a permit to an American-based company and you sit on your hands and you're saying that's, you know, that's the best you can do, that's where we get our argument and our discussion about the Sask Party government has underperformed horribly at the expense of many Saskatchewan people. And this is one yet another example of how this government has failed miserably on many fronts.

And this particular bill brought the notion forward, Mr. Speaker, that in their brilliance, Mr. Speaker, they decided we'll outsource, you know, when people want to buy their licence for hunting and permits for hunting, we'll outsource that to an American-based company. That'll serve Saskatchewan best, they thought, Mr. Speaker. Well they got a lot of criticism. We know that. We've got copies of letters of people that were just absolutely angry with them, saying, what are you thinking? What are you thinking putting in provisions of this sort? Like who thought of this idea to be able to outsource, outsource the issuance of hunting licences to a Tennessee-based company in the States?

Well, Mr. Speaker, it was the Saskatchewan Party government that came up with that brainchild, Mr. Speaker. And this is where I think it's important that we tell new ministers that are coming into their portfolios, you have to sing the message and you may not believe in the message, but what you don't want to do is expose the weakness of your government and some of the logic that doesn't . . . or some of the moves that defies logic. And this is one of the examples, Mr. Speaker.

And I listen with a bit of amusement to some of the criticism. And this one guy told me, he said to me, he said, you know, these guys used to talk about Saskatchewan first. They used to talk about Saskatchewan first, and so far they've sold off a Crown corporation that was generating millions of dollars for us. They sold that off. And now they are looking at selling our liquor stores that are making millions of dollars for the people of Saskatchewan, if not billions of dollars. They're looking at selling that, Mr. Speaker. And now they've outsourced the permits for hunting and fishing to an American-based company. Well what happened to the Saskatchewan first policy they were touting and screaming about and crying about when they were in opposition? Well the moment they became government, Mr. Speaker, guess what? The conservative ideology come home to roost.

And they couldn't help themselves, Mr. Speaker. They could not help themselves. They stuck to their ideology and this is the reason why under this bill we are now asking an American-based company for permits and licences to fish in Saskatchewan. And that's absolutely absurd, Mr. Speaker. It's absolutely absurd, Mr. Speaker.

And what they do is they turn around now and they say okay to the local vendor, to the local businessman that wasn't really making a lot of money on issuing permits, Mr. Speaker, because

there's not a lot of money to be made on issuing permits, Mr. Speaker, for a lot of local businesses. But it was convenient for some of those businesses, and it brought people to their doors to purchase other things like gas and groceries, so on and so forth. So it was an attraction to their store which helped make other sales. That was the point that they had, Mr. Speaker.

But the Saskatchewan Party government couldn't figure that out. They could not figure that out, Mr. Speaker. So the net effect is they took that opportunity to get customers through the doors of many of these local stores and they said, you now apply to a company in the States to get your fishing licence or hunting licence as a result of the Sask Party's intelligence, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, we sit here and we listen and we can hear the echoes of, oh, Saskatchewan first. That was what they used to say when they were in opposition, Saskatchewan first. Well, Mr. Speaker, we've seen evidence that there is no intent whatsoever to protect Saskatchewan people's interest as a result of some of the rules and regulations on Bill 161, that again qualifies and strengthens the position that the Sask Party government took that they should have this company out of Tennessee issuing permits and hunting licences to Saskatchewan people, to Saskatchewan outfitters, Mr. Speaker.

And I wonder, and I wonder how the Wildlife Federation felt about that, Mr. Speaker? I wonder what the wildlife advisory committee felt about that, Mr. Speaker? They probably thought it was a pretty silly idea, Mr. Speaker. They probably thought, what the heck are these guys doing?

And, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly the sentiment on this side of the Assembly. They can't figure this out, Mr. Speaker. And we've asked them time and time again. You've inherited a booming population, a growing population, a booming economy, and money in the bank, and money in the bank, Mr. Speaker. And all we asked them is, don't mess it up. Don't mess it up. And what did they do, Mr. Speaker? They messed it up. They messed it up. You know why, Mr. Speaker? Because they don't have a clue what to do in government. We still see evidence of that today in seniors' care, Mr. Speaker, in hoping that a consultant from the States will solve our health care problems, and front-line workers are asking to be engaged with that, Mr. Speaker. They still stubbornly dismiss that, Mr. Speaker.

So once again, despite given the largesse in terms of surplus money and having a growing population and a booming economy, Mr. Speaker, they still have found a way to mess it up. They still found a way to mess it up, Mr. Speaker. And this is another example of how they're driven by their ideology of saying, we the Saskatchewan Party have a better idea on how we can issue permits and licensing for fishing and trapping. We'll get an American-based company to do it. We'll get an American-based company to run our health care system.

And, Mr. Speaker, we in the NDP know and feel that once they begin to Americanize our country, Mr. Speaker, whether it's issuing of licensing or having them direct our health care, Mr. Speaker, that's going to hurt a lot of Saskatchewan people. And we tell people to be very, very careful. Be very, very careful what the Sask Party's doing. And watch with great interest as to

what they're doing, Mr. Speaker, because there is a plan over there. It's driven by the Conservatives, Mr. Speaker. Give them about six, seven more months and the Conservatives on that side will eat up the Liberals, Mr. Speaker. And that's what's going to happen over there pretty darn fast, Mr. Speaker.

So my argument, my argument today is that not only do you privatize certain Crown corporations that were generating millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker, you've now outsourced a very important service to the people of Saskatchewan to a company out of the States to issue fishing licences and permits for hunting, Mr. Speaker. And that's a shame. That's a shame because it impacts, it impacts our local businesses, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Forbes: — With leave to make introductions.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — The member has asked for leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and thank you to all the members of the House for the ability to make this introduction. We have some, a couple of guests in the east gallery, one that may be a bit of a stranger to us, a couple of strangers: Stephanie, the wife of our member from Rosemont here — Stephanie, if you can give us a wave — and William Gregory Craik Wotherspoon. There he is, giving a big wave. Yes, so if we could all give a great warm welcome to these folks and that other guy that's up there too. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

[15:45]

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 161 — *The Wildlife Amendment Act, 2014/Loi de 2014 modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur la faune* (continued)

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I want to also welcome William. It gives me great confidence to see another fine New Democrat sitting in our galleries today. So I'd like to welcome William today and of course his proud, proud parents, Mr. Speaker.

One of the things that's really important, as I mentioned at the outset, Mr. Speaker, is that we have got to get the people of Saskatchewan to realize what the Saskatchewan Party is doing. They are deteriorating services, Mr. Speaker. They are doing everything from privatizing our Crowns to outsourcing jobs and outsourcing services that really affect and support our local businesses throughout our province. And these are just two of the examples, Mr. Speaker, two of the examples that we are concerned about when it comes to Bill 161, *The Wildlife*

Amendment Act.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to go back a bit and give a few comments about the Wildlife Federation and of course the wildlife advisory committee, Mr. Speaker. As I said at the outset, those two organizations, these two groups of people have done a tremendous amount of work in the province over the years. I certainly have had a lot of great discussions with them, a lot of meetings with them. And, Mr. Speaker, I was always amazed and I was always pleased to see how some of these organizations were willing to work, they were willing to work co-operatively with any organization.

And one of the most astounding things that I saw, Mr. Speaker, in terms of some of the great leadership was their former president, and I think her last name was Lorenz. And Ms. Lorenz, I think it was Joyce, she was the president at the time. And she was very, very straightforward in the sense of what she wanted to represent the interests of her membership. And she was very strong, saying we all have to be responsible to ensure that we have good protection of our wildlife and of our fishing industry and so on and so forth. She didn't take no prisoners when it came to their position and their members' position, Mr. Speaker. And Joyce was really, really straightforward, and I really appreciated that. She was someone that you could certainly trust. And I admired her for her stance and her position, and she was not going to move a single inch from her position. And she was adamant — this was what we would like to see.

And, Mr. Speaker, a lot of the strength that she brought to the table in the wildlife advisory committee as well . . . The people and organizations that were around the table all had the same interests at heart, and that is to manage the resources, protect the land, and to ensure people are responsible when it comes to harvesting animals or fish and so on and so forth.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to say at the outset that I support their efforts in the past. I support their activity in terms of being co-operative. And they should be at the table when you begin to talk about issues of this sort.

That being said, that being said, Mr. Speaker, the FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations] should be involved, Mr. Speaker. The Métis Nation should be involved. The Northern Trappers Association should be involved, Mr. Speaker. A number of the environmental organizations in the province should be involved. The seniors in some of the organizations or some of the regions of the community that are active — and I gave the example today of the North — that are very active in not only hunting but trapping as well and fishing, we need to engage them as well.

And imagine for a moment, Mr. Speaker, the power you would have in that room if we had the wildlife advisory board and the wildlife association, the trappers, fishermen, elders, and people that have lived off the land, the environmental groups, if they're in the room architecting ways and means in which they could all participate in the one single cause of their life is to ensure that we have good management of the resources that the good Lord gave us.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that that's what some of

the history and some of the points that I wanted to raise when you talk about the Wildlife Federation and the wildlife advisory committee, my only point on that particular front, Mr. Speaker, is that they have got to be more involved and engaging, more involved and engaging with other organizations. And then we wouldn't mind seeing the list of the people that were consulted.

Now what's really important, Mr. Speaker, as I said at the start of my comments, if you were to look at the strain and the pressure that our wildlife find themselves under — and the protection of the ecosystem is another such strain — but just in terms of harvesting, Mr. Speaker, SERM's got a layer, not only the different users but the different time frames for different species. And it just becomes a really complicated management method that they undertake to, you know, just to manage the animal population of the province. And a good example, Mr. Speaker, is they'll have certain hunting seasons for certain people in certain areas at certain times. And then next week that all changes; they have a different group of people that could hunt a different animal during different times. It becomes very complex and very complicated.

So the job to manage our resources under the Saskatchewan environmental action is very complex. It's not simplistic. It has a lot of demands. And for every action that you undertake, there's a reaction somewhere. So you've got to be proactive and involve as many people as you can, otherwise problems will persist. And that's why it's important to note, I don't believe the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, I don't believe that the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan is involved in these consultations. Maybe they are, but there's no list here. I don't know if the FSIN is at the table with the Saskatchewan Party on management of the resources. I don't know if they're involved, Mr. Speaker.

And you also have to look at the notion around, as I mentioned, some of the trappers in northern Saskatchewan. I know there's a trappers association province-wide. There's the specific Northern Trappers Association. There's also the commercial fishing industry. Mr. Speaker, there's also a bunch of people involved with the protection of the land. There could be environmental groups that would want to be engaged. These are the people that we should be talking to so they can become part of the solution instead of being rejected by the Saskatchewan Party, then they hit the media and then it all looks like we're all fighting amongst each other which should not be the case, Mr. Speaker.

As an example I would use, Mr. Speaker, we talked about how a senior citizen in northern Saskatchewan can participate in the discussions on animal health. They can make a good, solid argument around how Fort McMurray oil activity is having a dramatic and negative, lasting and continual strain, and creating continual strain on the ecosystem health of northwestern Saskatchewan.

Every day we sit here in the Assembly, and young people can certainly relate to this, every single day we sit in this Assembly the oil and gas activity through the westerly winds is dropping pollution on our northern lands. And nobody is monitoring that, Mr. Speaker. Nobody is monitoring that. And does Saskatchewan get a cut of the financial action, so to speak? Not a penny, not a penny, Mr. Speaker. We get the pollution and

they get the cash.

So our argument today, when it comes to animal health they should begin to study the presence of hydrocarbons, which are attached to oil and gas activity, in our animals, in our forests, in our air, and in our water, Mr. Speaker. If you look for it, you will find it, and that's our biggest argument today.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I had the unfortunate job at the time, you know, of being the minister for SERM when the whole issue around chronic wasting surfaced, Mr. Speaker. I had the misfortune because we didn't want to know if chronic wasting disease was in the wild. We didn't want to see if there was a prevalence of that particular issue with our wildlife population.

And at the time I can remember it was suggested that we do tests on deer heads to see if the chronic wasting problem was in the deer animals. And the only way you can find that, Mr. Speaker, is if you harvest the animal, take the head in so the brain could be studied, and then you can determine whether there was the chronic wasting protein in the deer brain. And people might not or may know, chronic wasting in deer is similar to mad cow. It's got very similar actions and a very similar protein that creates the continual killing of the brain, so to speak.

So, Mr. Speaker, we didn't want to find that out. There was apprehension from a lot of different organizations. And at the end of the day, I thought it would be appropriate that we begin studying harvested animals, have their heads collected by a number of offices within SERM to see if there was a prevalence of chronic wasting in the animal population attached to deer.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the first 4 or 5,000 head that we studied I think at the time came back clean. There was no chronic wasting disease in the first 4 or 5,000 head that we collected as a result of people keeping the heads of the deer that they shot. And then, Mr. Speaker, we got a couple hits. Then we got a couple more positive tests and a couple more positive tests. And then all of a sudden, Mr. Speaker — I don't know what created the first batch not having any positive tests — all of a sudden it became very apparent that there was chronic wasting disease in the wild.

And, Mr. Speaker, some suggested the old shoot, shovel, and shut up theory behind planning about whether chronic wasting disease was existing in the animal health, Mr. Speaker. Well that wasn't the approach. The responsible approach by many people around the table was, we need to find out, we need to see what the prevalence are. And then once we do find out if it is or it isn't in the wild, then we need to take appropriate steps. And, Mr. Speaker, there were steps taken. As to what the update is today, we simply don't know.

So we know that there's a lot of stress and strain on animal health, and chronic wasting disease is one of the most trying challenges to the deer population. And the intent that they plan to find out, Mr. Speaker, was to ensure that people were aware of that danger and that they weren't harvesting wildlife and thus transferring that particular problem to their children or to their families. And that's really, really important at the time to find out.

A very, very tough choice at the time, and the choice that I certainly concurred with at the time, was to continue the testing to see the prevalence of chronic wasting in our deer population. At first it didn't look like there was a problem, but a continual effort, we ended up finding it, Mr. Speaker. And people in Saskatchewan now know that the chronic wasting disease issue is in our deer population, and we would certainly encourage them to take the proper precautions.

And, Mr. Speaker, we had good support from many people around the table. We had to find out, and find out we certainly did. So this is the value of having different organizations at the table, Mr. Speaker. I think it's important that you look at, like I said, at the Wildlife Federation, if you look at the wildlife advisory committee, you look at SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities], look at SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association], all these organizations certainly gave good advice. Nothing wrong. We obviously can't govern involving every single person, but it'd be nice to have as big attend as possible. And that's where we see this particular government lacking at times, is that there's two areas that we're very concerned about when they talk about consultation. One is, who did you consult with? And number two, consultation does not constitute agreement, you know. And what kind of consultation was undertaken?

These are some of the issues I think are really important because the Saskatchewan Party government like to say to people, oh we consulted with 10 organizations and all 10 organizations were happy. Well we tell the people, when the Sask Party government says that, you know, they could say they consulted them, but did they get that group's agreement? And they can interpret them being happy by one person smiling in a corner. That's what they would do, the Saskatchewan Party. So when they say they consulted groups and organizations, beware of that, because consulting people and getting their agreement are two different things. You know, they are two different things, Mr. Speaker. And there are many examples I'd like to share with you as to what the difference is between consultation and agreement, but I'm not going to get into that, Mr. Speaker. I just want to tell the people of Saskatchewan that be very, very careful.

And so again this Bill 161, it just changes . . . it just continues putting more emphasis on the fact that we have to get our licence and our permits from an American-based company. Consistent with the Saskatchewan Party on other fronts, whether it's the lean consultant they're paying \$40 million to, to tell us how to run our health care system instead of talking to the front-line workers. Now we see, Mr. Speaker, they're now outsourcing the permits and licence to a Tennessee-based company instead of working with our small businesses throughout our small communities. And that affects our outfitters, our lodges, and of course people that enjoy fishing, hunting, and trapping. And now we've got to go online to an American-based company to get a permit to do so.

[16:00]

Now, Mr. Speaker, the other thing that's really important is the bill also increases the limitation period for prosecution to three years, and what the logic there is that it gives the province more time to press charges against poachers. Now as I said at the

outset, we are not concerned when poachers are prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. If you find an animal carcass and only the antlers are harvested or certain body parts, this really upsets a lot of people, Mr. Speaker. And from our perspective, you know, we're taught as young people not to waste, not to be greedy, not to waste.

And you see animals being harvested for one or two body parts. That is something that needs to be discouraged, Mr. Speaker, and nobody on the NDP opposition is going to argue with being tough on poachers, Mr. Speaker, because they are the reason why, you know, we're seeing a lot of stress on certain animals is they're poaching them for profit. And anybody poaching for profit ought to be ashamed of themselves, and we wouldn't stand in the way of people being prosecuted for poaching, Mr. Speaker.

But what's really important, Mr. Speaker, is that you obviously have to go through the proper process for legal reasons, and is two years to three years, is that a longer time frame? Is that enough time? Is there enough preparatory time for some of the CEOs that are preparing cases to extend for a year? Where does that year come from, Mr. Speaker? Was there consultation with the legal community as to why the difference between two years and three years? Is there a particular logic for that and who did they consult?

Again as I go back to my earlier point, if you look at the consultation process, it'd be sure nice to say, why did you increase from two years to three years? And you say in the bill it's because it allows you to prosecute, gives you more time to prosecute poachers. Well we would have instinctively asked well, what . . . why a one-year time frame? Did you get consultation and did you get advice from the legal community? Is one year good enough? Like why is it one year? Why can't it be four years? Like is there some things that are . . . There's all these arguments and discussions that we want to find out about, and that's why it's important, Mr. Speaker, that we look at the whole notion of why we're extending from two years to three years.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the other issue brought forward in *The Wildlife Amendment Act*, and I know we're going to be sitting with the minister in due time on this front, is the whole notion of licence suspension. And I'm going to hold my comments on that particular issue, Mr. Speaker, until I meet with the minister to get good discussion on what that means and what is considered a hunting infringement. And the reason why, Mr. Speaker, is that the . . . As I said before, it's a complex job to try and manage the harvesting of animals, of wildlife, and of fish. It is very, very complex in the sense that we have a lot of people that want to do it, and we have the contrasting view that they should make it easier to hunt and fish and trap because a lot of young people aren't taking up that pastime anymore, and some people are being concerned about that. At the same time, we see that there is activity continuing in terms of harvesting these numbers.

And because it's so complex, Mr. Speaker, you have to make sure you have good consultation because as I mentioned, it's layered. Different people have different times and different needs for different animals and different seasons and different ways. And I'll give you an example. If you like to hunt deer

with a bow — there's a lot of people that hunt animals with a bow — you can do so in a certain area at a certain time only and if you're caught anywhere else, Mr. Speaker, then that problem would be there.

But because it's so complicated, because it's so layered, and because it's so . . . there's wildlife zones and there's all these issues all over the place, one could see how, not only do politicians become confused on this, but the person that's actually doing the hunting or the trapping or the harvesting, well they can easily get confused as well because you've got to really, really research exactly what you're allowed to do in a time frame before you go out there and do your hunt or do your fishing. So we need a lot of awareness. We need a lot of information. We need a public campaign to begin to teach people what you're allowed to do. Because what you don't want to do is have a bunch of people that are uninformed out there hunting and all of a sudden they get suspended for a year. And a lot of them will say, well I didn't know. And rightfully so, Mr. Speaker. A lot of them would not know if there is not proper consultation done.

So I think it's important, Mr. Speaker, that we look at ways and means in which we could engage those organizations, engage those people to make sure that their membership base, whether it's the Métis Nation or the Wildlife Federation or whether it's a local chapter of a wildlife committee, that they educate their members. And that's why I was pleased to see the Wildlife Federation being a part of this process because they can really add to the solution; they can really add to the awareness campaign. And they do have generally a lot of respect from a lot of different quarters for their work, and certainly their calling. And, Mr. Speaker, I would encourage that trend to continue.

That being said, one of the areas that I'm going to meet with the minister on are on the issue of First Nations hunting privileges, and of course the Métis hunting aspect as well. And I do so because there's a bit of confusion I think overall from many of the people that are impacted by the hunting and fishing, and confusion should not be the grounds to prosecute. Because according to this Act, that if you are prosecuted because you're not sure what's going on with the hunting infraction, all of a sudden you can't hunt for a year. Then you do it again and it goes to two years. Finally on the third serious offence, you actually have a lifetime ban.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am going to hold my comments on this particular aspect of the bill following our meeting with the minister because I want to get clarification as to what is being done to ensure that some of the hunting cases that have gone before the courts, whether it's Métis hunting in the Morin-Daigneault case for northwestern Saskatchewan, or whether it's the First Nations hunting privileges that they have asserted over time, and, Mr. Speaker, with the most recent Federal Court case that identifies the Métis as being similar in many legal aspects as First Nations, that also has a lot of moving parts to it in terms of legal ramifications for Saskatchewan. So we need to have a solid framework established, a framework of understanding between First Nations and Métis people and the people of Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management. Get these organizations together to have a common table of

understanding as to what is allowed and who this impacts.

Now the minister in the Act really clarifies poaching. And we're not arguing with poaching, but poaching should not be a disguise for those that want to attack Métis hunting privileges or First Nation hunting privileges, because these have been dealt with through the court system. And no reason for us to fight the system through court because that doesn't do anybody any good. It doesn't do anybody in the province, doesn't do anybody in terms of the legal profession, nor does it do anybody in the governing profession any favours if we have to have all these fights through the court system again, because once again the courts will determine who is right. And after months and months of cost and hard feelings, Mr. Speaker, what I think the government will find out is that when you go to court with First Nations or Métis people on hunting privileges, generally the government loses.

So maybe you should have solid engagement: save a lot of frustrations, save a lot of money, save a lot of fight that will occur between these groups, instead trying to find a common ground so we're able to respect each other and harvest accordingly without fear of the ban from hunting for a lifetime if you don't have an understanding of what's going on.

So, Mr. Speaker, we're going to have those discussions with the minister at the appropriate time. I think that this ban for the purposes of people that are poaching, that if they get caught the third time then they should be banned for life if they're poaching animals and using animals for only certain body parts and profiting from those body parts . . . So it's a long, it's a long and very complicated issue. And it talks about . . . Again I'll read from the notes here. Under the current Act the person who breaks the law has their licence suspended for a period of time and has to pay a fine. Once the suspension period is over, the offender can purchase a licence even if the fine is unpaid. Under the new Act, the offender must wait until the suspension is over and pay the fine before that person can buy another licence.

So these are some of the issues I think that are important, that they do have a licence. In the old days they used to be able to not pay a fine and still get their licence for the following year. But this new Act says that you cannot do that, that you've got to pay off your fine first before you get your new licence. And I think that provision is very similar to the vehicle driver's licence that if you do have a fine, a parking fine or a speeding fine, that if you have it in that particular year that you can't get a new driver's licence unless that particular fine is paid for. Well that's the same provision under this particular Act, that the offender must wait till the suspension is over. If they're caught hunting illegally and they get a fine, they have to pay the fine too before they can get a different licence, Mr. Speaker. The old Act said that you can have the fine still outstanding and still get a licence, so this Act clarifies that and fixes that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have a number of situations that I want to share. This past season in northwestern Saskatchewan, because there was a successful court case called the Morin and Daigneault case, and the Morin-Daigneault case was a couple of Métis people who were out hunting in northwestern Saskatchewan . . . And there is a general recognition — I'm not sure if I'm going to do justice to explaining the court case — because the First Nations and the Métis people have always

traditionally hunted and gathered and fished in certain areas many, many years ago, the courts respected that position. And of course the First Nations signing treaties have a right to harvest animals as they did when they signed the treaty, and so that still applies to this day.

Now, Mr. Speaker, where does that leave the Métis people? Well the Métis, as many people may know, is of mixed origin. I think that's the general phrase where you have many Métis people that may have had Scottish background. Most of them have French background along with the Aboriginal community. So the Métis do have a lot of First Nations family and they're of mixed blood, so to speak.

And so what happened, Mr. Speaker, is that there was a couple of hunters, Mr. Morin and Mr. Daigneault, who were charged for hunting out of season or hunting illegally, and that court case was taken forward. And if memory serves me correct, the gentleman that represented these two people who were being prosecuted was Mr. Clem Chartier. I'm not sure if he handled the case himself entirely or he had help or he got the case moved forward. Well I think as a result of some of his work and his involvement over time, the court sided with Mr. Morin and Mr. Daigneault because the argument was that they had the legal right to hunt and fish in that area because the Métis had a historical presence there for years before some of the laws were enacted, and, Mr. Speaker, that put them in a similar basic legal position as many First Nations are.

So as a result of that, I think one of the consensus in some of the discussions and in the court's final deliberations they basically said, as a result of the Morin-Daigneault case, the Métis should be able to hunt in this specific area that have identified as a land base for Métis many, many years ago.

So that Morin-Daigneault case, while it was a victory for the Métis people, it was confined to a specific area in which they could hunt, not province wide. And that of course was a different argument. So what happened with the Morin-Daigneault case, Mr. Speaker, is that it established the fact that the Métis did have hunting privileges as they did prior to some of the laws being introduced that were similar to the First Nations argument under treaty. So they were allowed to hunt. The Morin-Daigneault case was a successful defence. These individuals were from Turnor Lake, I believe, in which the government or the court said, people in this particular area have hunted and fished and trapped for years and laws that came into effect did not recognize that, so therefore we're siding with the Morin-Daigneault case in the sense that they did have this historical right to harvest these animals.

Now what happened, Mr. Speaker, is some of the Métis people in our area of course were happy with that because that's what they had done all their lives. They'd fished and hunted and trapped and that's how their family survived. So they were pretty happy with the ruling because it allowed them to live their life as they had lived them for years and years and years.

[16:15]

And so what happened this past year, Mr. Speaker, is that some of the . . . When you're out hunting in the bush you can get disorientated. You can lose your bearings fairly fast. Well I do

anyway. And some of these individuals, as they're out hunting, which they have traditionally done for years, they can sometimes pass a legal line in the sense of a legal geographical description of where you're allowed to hunt, you know, without being charged. Well if you're a kilometre over that line or 10 kilometres over a line, it's hard to say where you're at when it comes to which longitude or latitude bearing does the Morin-Daigneault cover. Well, Mr. Speaker, perhaps the COs [conservation officer] know that, but a lot of hunters do not know that. They're not familiar with the description of land as to where they're allowed to hunt relatively free of prosecution if you're Métis.

So what happened, Mr. Speaker, is COs, conservation officers, they'd come along and they'd issue warning tickets. They'd issue warning tickets to people saying, well you've got to be careful. Yes, the Morin-Daigneault case is there, but you're off the jurisdiction by 2 miles or whatever the case may be. So a lot of the frustration by the hunters out there were expressed to me saying, you know, why are we getting these warning tickets? I thought we dealt with all of this information, all of these problems.

Well this went on and on and on for a while. And we have to get clarification, Mr. Speaker, to the Métis Nation, to the northern governments, to the FSIN, with the COs sitting at the table with us so they understand as well. So both the Métis hunters, the COs. And, Mr. Speaker, the province and the government, and the minister especially, has to give direct orders and direct directions, solid directions as to when you should issue warning tickets or an infraction.

Because in this Act, if some Métis guy strays a couple hundred metres from where the Morin-Daigneault line crosses in terms of being able to hunt in a specified area, free of prosecution, well if they stray 200 metres from that, well is that a hunting fine? Is that an infraction? Well we don't know the details of that.

Well does the CO know that? I'm assuming COs have their GPS [Global Positioning System], and they'd have a pretty good idea where this is, but the hunters need to know. The leadership needs to know. Because you get all this confusion out there, and what happens is people get prosecuted and they get a fine and they fight this in court, and we're back to square one.

So that's one of the reasons why, Mr. Speaker, we're not going to make too many comments on this particular aspect of the bill until we meet with the minister to get clarification as to what their plan of action is to deal with the whole notion of First Nations hunting rights and Métis Nation or Métis people's hunting privileges as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, I've been going on a bit about *The Wildlife Amendment Act*. There's a lot of issues that we want to talk about, and I know my colleagues have a lot more to add. And I am going to re-enter the debate on a different venue, Mr. Speaker, following our meeting with the minister, as a means to explain to people what is being undertaken to make sure that this misunderstanding is not out there, that COs and northern leadership and especially the Métis people that are out hunting have a good understanding of what their rights and privileges

and responsibilities are. It all works for everyone.

And from there, we can reduce a lot of misunderstanding and hopefully avoid a lengthy court case that costs a lot of money and creates a lot of angst amongst the people. So I think we need to have those hard discussions, and I look forward to my meeting with the minister later on this week to discuss those matters.

So, Mr. Speaker, I went on a bit about what the bill itself is all about and some of the concerns. We have a lot more we want to add, and I will re-enter the debate when the time is appropriate to do so. So on that note I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 161, *The Wildlife Amendment Act*.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 161, *The Wildlife Amendment Act, 2014*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 162 — *The Enforcement of Money Judgments Amendment Act, 2014*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of *The Enforcement of Money Judgments Amendment Act, 2014*.

In May 2012, *The Enforcement of Money Judgments Act* came into effect, introducing a major revision in judgment enforcement law in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, thus far, implementation of the new program has gone well. However minor amendments are now proposed to address some practical and technical issues identified by the sheriff's office and the public as lessons learned through their experiences.

Mr. Speaker, this bill will do a number of things. It will introduce amendments to provide that a notice of seizure of employment income will last for a 24-month period of the enforcement instruction without requiring it to be renewed after 12 months.

It will include a revised process for the sheriff to provide timely, clear title to a third party purchaser of land where the judgment creditors and the judgment debtor have agreed to payment out of the proceeds of the sale in order to address the judgment debt of the vendor.

It will ensure that the sheriff is not considered to be an account debtor by reason of receiving funds from a debtor. It will provide additional direction on the payment of premiums to initiating creditors. It will revise certain seizure provisions and enforcement instruction provisions to facilitate operations of the sheriff's office. It will provide appointment of a director of sheriffs.

It will address technical priority issues regarding advances and consistency of language with *The Securities Transfer Act*. It

will allow the director of sheriffs to waive the enforcement of small amounts such as fees that remain due after judgment distribution. It will remove the forms from the regulations and allow the director of sheriffs to provide the required forms. It will update the language in the Act to reflect the wording in the new Queen's Bench rules.

Mr. Speaker, it is our view that these amendments will further enhance the operation of a new, modern judgment enforcement system in our province. So, Mr. Speaker, with that, I'm pleased to move second reading of the money judgment enforcements Act, 2014.

The Speaker: — The minister has moved second reading of Bill No. 162, *The Enforcement of Money Judgments Amendment Act, 2014*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And we're going to have fun on Bill 162 in a sense, Mr. Speaker, that we're thinking this bill is going overboard in terms of granting a lot of different authority and powers to not only the sheriff, Mr. Speaker, but also to the minister in general.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we look at this bill, Bill 162, and there's two glaring things that we want to point out as our first initial comment on this bill as the opposition. The first thing is the garnishee of salaries, Mr. Speaker. We think the garnishee of salaries is something that you've got to be very, very careful at. We know that right now when people owe taxes, Mr. Speaker, that the Canada revenue Act is allowing, allow the provision . . . They have the authority and they have the power and they have the duty to garnishee salaries and to have those salaries paid in lieu of taxes that have not been paid. Now, Mr. Speaker, we're also seeing the seizure of property. We're seeing this kind of language in this particular bill and cover the costs of operating costs, looking at the sheriff's costs as well, and the minister's directive, Mr. Speaker.

The point that we're trying to raise in this particular bill, Bill No. 162, *The Enforcement of Money Judgments Amendment Act*, is that people of Saskatchewan need to pay very close attention to this particular bill because there are some powers being inferred upon the government, in particular the ministers as well as the sheriffs, in which we think there may be a bit of overkill on this particular bill. And we need to get clarification, very good clarification as to what those powers might be because, Mr. Speaker, we think some of those powers might be identified through rules and regulations that are not subjected to the scrutiny to the Assembly itself. So we need to get that information, Mr. Speaker.

Now we look at this particular bill, the sheriff's office, or *The Enforcement of Money Judgments Amendment Act*, and we need to know a number of things. First of all, who asked for this particular Act to come forward and make these amendments and confer these powers onto certain parties? Who asked for this to be done, Mr. Speaker? And who is the target audience, if you will, of these individuals that want this Act to come forward? How many people would be impacted by this Act, and how many particular actions have been created in the province of Saskatchewan to justify this Act?

This Act is really, really important to pay attention to. We've noted that right from the start, that if this is something that the Saskatchewan Party want to do to put further stress, financial hardships on young, struggling families, Mr. Speaker, people of Saskatchewan ought to know about this. If you're talking about garnishee of salaries as a new power under this Act, if you're talking about seizures of property under this Act, if you're talking about covering the cost of judges, or not judges but sheriffs and the operating costs of the sheriff's office, Mr. Speaker, that is warning flags galore for people out there that may be having financial hardships, Mr. Speaker. Because this shows that the government's coming along and they're using a sledgehammer, Mr. Speaker, to try and go after people that are having some difficult times in their lives, Mr. Speaker. We often in the Assembly, as the opposition . . . The NDP have always taken the small guy's fight, Mr. Speaker. That's been our history and we'll continue doing so.

Now what we see happen is the Saskatchewan Party is siding themselves with big oil companies in Alberta and not worrying about our environment, as I spoke about earlier. They're letting a lot of big business in the States dictate how we run our affairs here in the province of Saskatchewan.

And now we see this particular bill that talks about garnishee of salary, seizure of property, covering the costs of the sheriff, covering the costs of the sheriff's office, a minister's directive in terms of what should be going forth and what is not going forth. These are all red flags that the opposition is quite concerned about, Mr. Speaker. We have to look at these issues in detail as to what is being proposed. And I want to assure the minister that we're going to do exactly that.

We're going to be talking to a lot of people in the different communities and people throughout the province, the families that are struggling, Mr. Speaker, to say, this is what your Saskatchewan Party has decided to do to the people that may be having some financial difficulties. They're giving the sheriff's office and themselves more power over you to garnishee your salaries, to seize your property, and to cover all their costs in doing so at your expense. These are some things that we want to make sure we pay a lot of attention to. And some of the provisions, no matter how much the minister may say it's just the normal course of business, this is new stuff that people of Saskatchewan need to pay attention to.

And what perplexes me is that, who asked for these changes? Why all of a sudden are these changes coming forward? Which interest group has asked for these changes, as hard as they are, to come forward to the legislative agenda that the Saskatchewan Party government is controlling? Which party asked for that? That's the first question that we asked for, Mr. Speaker. And are these powers, like garnishing salaries, is this overkill, Mr. Speaker? And seizing people's property: this is getting a bit too much.

As you look at some of the issues, Mr. Speaker, we know that many people and many families in Saskatchewan are being left behind by this boom. We know that. We see a lot of examples of that. We know that there are many people that use credit wisely and some have struggles with credit. There's no argument about that, Mr. Speaker. We see that happening in many lives. And, Mr. Speaker, we have to obviously work with

these families to ensure that they're able to maintain their homes, that they're able to maintain food on their plates, that they're able to maintain their jobs without having the Saskatchewan Party come along with yet another club to knock some of these struggling families down to their feet so that they're able to come along with Acts like this that will give them the power to do so.

So, Mr. Speaker, we look at this bill. We have a lot to say on Bill 162. It's one thing to be able to work closely with families that are having problems with debt. There's no question we need to work with them. And yes, debt is a very valuable tool. I'm not going to argue about that, Mr. Speaker. But when you start using a club to protect people . . . or to get their money back off people that are struggling, and that club being called Bill 162 where you can garnishee salaries, you can seize property, and all the costs attached for the sheriff's time and his office are part of the cost of covering . . . or the cost of you settling the debt with these individuals, Mr. Speaker, I think we've gone way too far on this particular bill.

And we need to know how different organizations and different people feel about this bill. And that's why it's important that we tell people, and we yell it from the highest hills, we will, that Bill 162 has some certain powers and certain strengths, that they want to position themselves as a government over those families that are struggling right now under debt and working hard to make ends meet while these guys have got a couple more big hammers to help them along, the Saskatchewan Party does, to help them punish those families that are struggling, Mr. Speaker. And we don't believe that this is right in any way, shape, or form.

[16:30]

So I look at the bill itself, Bill 162. We want to make sure that we ask the one fundamental question is, who asked for this bill? Which interest group? Give us the list of the people that asked for this bill and allow for the provisions of the garnishee of salaries, the seizure of property. Which groups and organizations asked the Sask Party government to put this through as a new Act and more powers to do so? Which group and organizations asked for this? We want to know which groups.

And when we say which groups, Mr. Speaker, we don't want to hear, oh we consulted with this group. Consultation does not constitute agreement. We've always argued that point: consultation does not constitute an agreement. So don't list organizations, as the government, that said to you, well we don't agree to any of these changes. Then you put them as one of the groups that you consulted with. That's not the way to do business, and that's why it's important we tell people out there, if the government say they consulted with certain groups, it doesn't mean those groups agreed with the changes in this Act.

And I would suggest that on this particular Act where they're talking about garnishee of salaries, where they're talking about seizure of property and giving the office of the sheriff more powers and the ministers more powers to do so, Mr. Speaker, this is not an Act that we should take lightly. And this is not an Act that I think the people of Saskatchewan would appreciate, especially if it's starting to hurt many working families and

young couples throughout our province of Saskatchewan.

And that's why it's important that we have this legislative agenda so we're able to expose to the people of Saskatchewan what the Saskatchewan Party is trying to do, using their legal means to go after those that are struggling under huge debt that, in the event that they fail, that these hammers will come tumbling down. And guess what? They lose their house. They lose their salary, and they lose their hope as a family of ever making it in the province of Saskatchewan that has such riches, Mr. Speaker.

Why would you bring an Act of this sort, Mr. Speaker, during a time and the opportunity when Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Party government is flush with cash? Why would you want to bring an Act in of this sort when the economy is moving along really well, Mr. Speaker? Why would you want to bring an Act of this sort when you know many young families are struggling to maintain their homes and to feed their children, Mr. Speaker? Why would you bring an Act of this sort into the Assembly when we should be talking about an Act to strengthen young families, an Act to put more money into education, an Act to train our young people, to engage the Aboriginal community as well? These are some of the Acts that should be coming forward in this Assembly.

But what happens in the middle of a booming business opportunity for Saskatchewan, an economy that's strong — what happens, we have a growing population — the Saskatchewan Party brings in an Act, Bill 162, an Act called *The Enforcement of Money Judgments Amendment Act* that talks about garnishing salaries and seizing of property, Mr. Speaker. What kind of silly notion . . . Why would a government do something this silly in the middle of a good economic opportunity for Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker? Lord knows where they got this advice from.

We want to know who gave you that advice? Who warrants some of the enforcements of this particular bill? Which particular group or organization asked for this? That's the first thing we want to know, Mr. Speaker.

And I think from our perspective as an opposition, we're going to tell the people of Saskatchewan that the Saskatchewan Party is giving themselves more authority, more control, more power, more hammers to come after you in the event that you're struggling under debt, to seize your home, to garnishee your salary. And guess what? They're going to cover their costs at your expense as well. I think this is an absolute silly first step, Mr. Speaker.

We're going to find out all the details of this particular bill, and we're going to advise as many organizations as we can that this is what the Saskatchewan Party is trying to do. We need to find out who asked for these provisions in this bill. Who asked for those changes? And once you know who asked for those changes, Mr. Speaker, once you know who's going to benefit from these changes, then the NDP opposition is going to come along and tell people exactly which organizations asked for this bill so they can deal with them from the perspective of customers. And then from the perspective of politicians you can tell people, these are the organizations that's pushing the Sask Party button to come after you under garnishee of salaries and

seizure of property, including your home. And the people of Saskatchewan, the struggling young families will know who's exactly on their side, Mr. Speaker.

We don't think, we don't think that empowering the sheriff's office to seize your property or to seize your bank account is the right way to working families, Mr. Speaker. We need to help working families find easier ways to maintain their home. We need to have the opportunity for working families, for home ownership, Mr. Speaker. We need to do as much as we can for child daycare, Mr. Speaker, for supporting the education of our young people, the health of our families. These are what we need to do to support the working men and women in Saskatchewan, the struggling men and women that are working in Saskatchewan.

This bill is not a good step. Why would they put a bill of this sort in the middle of good economic times? It's confusing to us as an opposition. It's worrisome to many people who know many people that struggle under debt, Mr. Speaker. And once again we're seeing the Saskatchewan Party come along and they're saying, guess what? We're going to start garnisheeing your salaries. We're going to start seizing your property. We're going to give the sheriff more authority, more control over you. And guess what? We're going to also bring in policies and procedures and rules and regulations at a later time that positions the minister to determine whether your house is taken or not. And, Mr. Speaker, that is going over the line, from my perspective.

There's always, always an important part that you have to incorporate when you're talking about issues of this sort, is you want to educate the families. Absolutely that's important. We also know that . . . [inaudible] . . . debt is a valuable tool if it's properly used. We understand that as well, Mr. Speaker. But when you're struggling and you have a difficult time, you don't need more government intervention and more government hammers coming at you. You need some good understanding, some good support to strengthen your family and keep your perspective and keep your job and keep working and keep focused and keep that spirit alive without having the government come after you — and the sheriff, Mr. Speaker.

This smacks of an old tale of Robin Hood, you know, where the Sheriff of Nottingham comes along and collects all these taxes or collects your salary or collects your home if you're not paying that, Mr. Speaker.

The bottom line here is we want to know who's pushing the Saskatchewan Party government. And the Minister of the Economy chirps from his seat, Mr. Speaker. We want to know who pushed his button to put a bill of this sort in the middle of good economic times, Mr. Speaker. Which party asked to give them more powers to garnishee salaries, seize your property, and give the sheriff more powers at the directive of the minister in these good economic times? Which person, which party, which organization asked for that, Mr. Speaker? That's our first question on this particular bill.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we've seen already how the Saskatchewan Party operates. Look at some of the struggling families. Young working mom and dads, you know, have a difficult time getting a mortgage. The idea of home ownership for many young

couples is totally unachievable now, given the high price of homes and no help from the government.

You look at the housing programs that were in place. I believe that one program they were bragging about, about six, seven months ago, in terms of affordable homes for families. Well I understand from my colleague from Saskatoon Centre that the developer that got the money to develop these homes for low- and moderate-income families basically said, I changed my mind. I'm not going to do this anymore. And the government said, okay fine. See you later. They walk away with our grant, and you can do what you want with your homes. And that left many, many young and also low-income families out in the street, Mr. Speaker. And that's another example of the callousness of this government and the bitterness of this government towards working men and women of this province.

So I think it's really important that people pay attention to these bills because they do have some major ramifications to their lives. And, Mr. Speaker, I look at some of my colleagues in some of the constituencies that, you know, they represent rural areas. They represent the inner city, represent northern Saskatchewan. And we know that many families struggle from time to time, and many of them use debt in a most responsible way. Like I said at the outset, it's a valuable tool, but many of them are just treading water, barely keeping their head above water between the mortgage payment, the food, the medical costs, going to school, clothing. The list goes on as to what it costs to raise a family today.

And instead of this government understanding that and putting the appropriate measurements or measures in place to help these struggling families, they come along with this bill, Bill 162, that talks about garnishee of salary, that talks about seizure of property, that talks about the sheriff getting new powers, and talks about the minister conferring more power upon himself or herself.

And, Mr. Speaker, this during a time when Saskatchewan has unprecedented revenue, Mr. Speaker, when the government is flush with cash. They refuse to recognize that there are families out there that are having a difficult time making ends meet. And once they begin the depressing slide of not being able to pay their bills, not being able to meet all their obligations on a regular basis, along comes the Saskatchewan Party government with some clubs and makes sure that these families are beaten to the ground with no chance of ever making it. That's the Saskatchewan Party way, Mr. Speaker, and that's why many people in Saskatchewan still have a strong dislike — and that number's growing — a strong dislike for the Saskatchewan Party government because they simply haven't got the basics figured out.

Mr. Speaker, look at the notion of covering the sheriff's costs, covering the costs of the office as well. Like who determined the value of those costs? How would you rate the cost of a sheriff's salary? Who sets the salary of the sheriff, Mr. Speaker? I'm assuming it's the provincial government.

But what happens here, Mr. Speaker, is they're going to start implicating some of the debt plans of this bill to ensure that the sheriff's office costs are part of this bill and that the sheriff's cost himself, his salary, are also part of the bill that some of

these families have to pay in the event that they're in default of their loans or default of their debt.

Now again I go back to my point, Mr. Speaker. Who asked for this bill? Which organizations came to the Saskatchewan Party and said, can you put this bill in place? We want to know who the government consulted on this bill. What was the intent behind this bill? Who asked the government to put this bill forward, Mr. Speaker? These are the questions that we have to ask and we'll continually ask. Until we get the answers as to who asked for this bill, Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue pressing this government to find out why this bill was introduced at this time to the Assembly.

Now, Mr. Speaker, again I point out that there are things that the Saskatchewan Party could have done. We argued today that when the NDP left government, we had an \$8 billion budget. Today now, the Saskatchewan Party's got a \$14 billion budget, almost twice the amount of money, almost twice the amount of money that we had when we last had our budget in 2007. They have twice the amount of money and, Mr. Speaker, they come along with a bill that now talks about seizing people's homes and seizing people's salaries from the bank. Now what's that about, Mr. Speaker? That's just plain silly.

You have twice the amount of money to work with than the previous NDP government did, and you have all this money. You have a growing population and an economy that's red-hot, and now you're talking about garnisheeing people's salary and taking away their homes. Like what is wrong with this government? There's so many things that they're doing wrong. And it's exactly what we say on this side of the House. We know that their shelf life for that front bench is two or three years at the most. Half those guys on the other side, Mr. Speaker, are also going to be stepping down next election, Mr. Speaker, and the other half we're going to get rid of just through a process called election.

So it's important to the people of Saskatchewan to know this: the Saskatchewan Party government are a tired, old government that's flush, that's flush, that's flush with NDP cash, but they can't figure out what their role is, and they can't figure out what they've got to do as government, Mr. Speaker. I see total confusion, a lack of leadership from that side that goes right from the Premier to the Minister of the Economy to the Deputy Premier, Mr. Speaker.

And we'll see more of how their inaction and their inability and their underperformance is not deserving of Saskatchewan people's vision for the future, Mr. Speaker. We're going to see evidence of that as we go down this path. From my perspective, Mr. Speaker, from my perspective we know, we know that the next couple of years, Mr. Speaker, we're going to see a lot of change over there. And the biggest change we'll see is less numbers, less . . . [inaudible] . . . less vision, Mr. Speaker, and to me the people of Saskatchewan know this. I think they know this as well, Mr. Speaker. The good times have since passed them by.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the next two or three years, you're going to see a significant change in direction, Mr. Speaker. From the NDP perspective, when we see bills of this sort, Bill 162, Mr. Speaker, when we see them going after working men and

woman that are having struggles, to go after their salaries, to go after their homes, Mr. Speaker, to give more powers to the sheriff, what is that all about in this time of prosperity? Why are they bringing this bill forward now, Mr. Speaker? It is because they are who they are, Mr. Speaker. That's why. They're intent on working against the working men and woman who are struggling in this province. They have no care, no concern for those people.

[16:45]

And, Mr. Speaker, that's why I think it's important that next election we send these guys a message that you had billions more to work with, and you couldn't get the job done. That's the bottom line, Mr. Speaker. You couldn't get the job done. And that's why you're bringing bills of this sort along: to give yourselves more hammers to begin to hurt young working men and woman in this province who aspire for home ownership and who use debt on a regular basis. And if they have struggles, there's no understanding from the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker, no understanding whatsoever, Mr. Speaker.

Now the people in front are giggling away. They're obviously, Mr. Speaker, they haven't had any financial crises, you know, in their lives. So the problem we have here, Mr. Speaker, is that you look at some of the families that are being impacted, the families being impacted by their legislation, Mr. Speaker, when you're conferring more power to the sheriff to seize property and garnishee salaries, Mr. Speaker. There's three ministers that are giggling away in the front row of the Saskatchewan Party. That's not funny when families are going through that, Mr. Speaker.

It is a trying time for many families to try and own their own home. It's a trying time for families who are trying to afford to keep food on their table. It's a trying time for families to keep working at some of the salaries that are really low in this province of Saskatchewan. And yes, they use credit because they have no choice. But you come along as a government that's uncaring, that has no vision whatsoever to be inclusive of all the people of Saskatchewan, and they come along with bills of this sort that gives them more power to take your cheque, to take your home and, Mr. Speaker, otherwise they don't care what happens to you in the future.

And that is really a shame for a party that inherited so much, for a party that inherited so much and enjoyed a free ride, Mr. Speaker. They have enjoyed a free ride. And no matter what the right wing Saskatchewan Party may say to the public or to the media, we know on this side of the House they're getting a free ride from the previous administration, Mr. Speaker.

We tell them, enjoy your free ride. It's coming to an end soon. Enjoy your free ride. You've underperformed. You lack vision. You have no governing skills, Mr. Speaker, and you're absolutely silly to bring bills of this sort into the Assembly. When the times are supposed to be good for everyone, you're talking about garnisheeing salaries.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think that people aren't realizing it, but they soon will, that this government has mismanaged their finances once again. They have mismanaged the finances once again. And what's the evidence of that, Mr. Speaker? Because

one of the things that's important here is they're looking at garnisheeing salaries here. Now are they in that bad of shape where they've got to start garnisheeing working men and women's salaries and seizing their property, that you have to be able to use those revenues to subsidize your sheriff's office because you can't give them the proper resources from the Ministry of Finance office? Is that what it comes down to, Mr. Speaker?

And they're laughing in the front row there. They find that funny, Mr. Speaker. There are many people out there that I would suggest, highly suggest that they pay very close attention to this bill. They've got to pay close attention to this bill because it gives extra powers to the minister, extra powers to the sheriff's office, and those powers mean garnisheeing salaries, Mr. Speaker, seizing of property. And in the process of seizing your home, they're also going to bill you for their time. To add insult to injury, you're going to pay the cost of the sheriff and his office in seizing your home so their friends can get your house and your salary through the garnisheered property, Mr. Speaker.

And I'll tell you one thing, a lot of people in Saskatchewan don't like a government that does that to people that are having difficulty and struggling to make ends meet. Because there's a lot of families that have that problem, and it's a problem that of course they don't understand nor appreciate.

So, Mr. Speaker, my colleagues are going to have a lot of opportunity to talk to a lot of groups. We want to talk to the people that talk about reducing poverty in our province. They want to attach their bandwagon to that. Well guess what, Mr. Speaker? They come along with a bill like this, and yet they say, oh, we want to reduce poverty. And I say, well why do you have to introduce a bill like that? There's no reason for you to confer extra powers on the sheriff to take your salary away, to take your home away. Why would you want to put a bill like that to a time of economic prosperity? It's totally confusing as to what the Sask Party wants.

So to me, from my perspective, we think that one of the special interest groups are pushing them and pulling their . . . They're like puppets being told, put this bill through so we can get more of our debt back from some of the families that can't afford to keep their home. And, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what happens here in Saskatchewan, why the NDP will continue to fight for those people that don't have a voice in this Assembly and continue to tell the Sask Party, despite the largesse that you got, you should leave working men and women who are struggling to make ends meet, leave them alone. Don't put extra powers here to try and garnishee their salary or take away their home. Like where did that come from? Who asked for that?

That's the fundamental argument that we have today in the Assembly on this bill, Mr. Speaker. We want to know why these changes are here now and who asked for them. Because once you get the information who asked for them, Mr. Speaker, then we'll know the interest of those groups and we'll know the interest of the Saskatchewan Party. And from our vantage point, the interest that the Saskatchewan Party has is not for working men and women who are struggling to make ends meet because their policies do not help those that are struggling to find decent, affordable homes, those that are struggling to find food

on the table, Mr. Speaker, and those that are able to put their kids in some good, decent daycare. Those are issues that the Saskatchewan Party doesn't care about, they don't come forward with, Mr. Speaker. Instead they come forward with a bill like Bill 162, *The Enforcement of Money Judgments Amendment Act*.

We have a lot to say on that, Mr. Speaker. We're going to pay very, very close attention to this bill, almost every bill that they bring forward, Mr. Speaker. This really smacks of the right wing rhetoric that we've been hearing from these guys for years. They're back, Mr. Speaker. They're back, and the Saskatchewan people are going to, they're going to see that, Mr. Speaker. They're going to see that, and they're going to certainly adjust their actions in the future more favourable to the NDP.

So, Mr. Speaker, as much as the right wingers want to chirp from their chairs over there, my point is that the booming economy that Saskatchewan's enjoying today had nothing to do with the right wingers, had nothing to . . . And that's what really gets them upset, Mr. Speaker. They inherited that booming economy and a growing population, and that's what really sticks in the craw of many of the right wingers, Mr. Speaker. They knew they didn't create the booming economy, yet every parade, there they are, waving at the crowd, pretending that they had it figured out, Mr. Speaker, when in fact they just simply, they just simply inherited. They came in at the right time, Mr. Speaker, and they couldn't figure out how to use it properly. Almost twice the amount of money each year they get, this unprecedented revenue, and they can't figure it out. Their choices have been poor, Mr. Speaker. They lack vision.

And, Mr. Speaker, from my perspective, after seven years, seven years in unprecedented revenue, why are they so confused, and why do they look old and tired, Mr. Speaker? Because, Mr. Speaker, they never had the vision for Saskatchewan that's positive for many working men and women and families in the province. And that's why bills like 162 come along to garnishee people's salaries and to seize their property. Like, what's that about? What's that about?

They should be putting bills forward to double the amount of support that these families need to keep their homes, to keep their kids in good daycare, to keep food on the table, to help and to applaud some of them that are working low-paying jobs to try and show their kids that working for a living is something that's good and should be built on for the future. And it's a good example for many kids to see their mom and dad are working. And what happens, Mr. Speaker, when they get themselves into a situation where they just simply can't make ends meet? The Saskatchewan Party comes along and finishes them off with Acts of this sort that allows them to garnishee their salaries and to seize their home.

And I say, in this day and age in 2014, it's a crying shame to see a government with unprecedented revenues, with \$14 billion a year to operate with, where they have to start going after working men and women that have trouble with making ends meet, Mr. Speaker. There should be good supporting mechanisms in place to protect those families, to help those families, but the Saskatchewan Party has nothing to do with that. And we're going to tell absolutely any organization that

they pretend to side with, what exactly their deal is. Because Bill 162, Bill 162 is the bill that tells us that the Saskatchewan Party is back. They're back at hurting working families. They're back at not caring for those that have struggles, Mr. Speaker. And they're going to give those that have power over us more power to seize our home and to take away our bank accounts. And this is 2014.

So the people of Saskatchewan need to pay very close attention to this bill. It's got a lot of moving components to it. I don't like it from where we sit in terms of them trying to downplay it. And one of the ways that they downplay it is laughing and giggling in the Assembly when we talk about these issues. They find it funny that families struggle. Well that's fine, Mr. Speaker. They will pay a price for that. And I think people of Saskatchewan will certainly know in the future what the Saskatchewan Party is all about.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have a lot more that we want to say on this particular bill as I said. My colleagues will have the opportunity to speak on this bill at a later date. I want to re-enter the debate, and I want to ask the member from Melfort that's chirping from his chair, who asked you to put this bill forward? Well, Mr. Speaker, I can almost guarantee you he won't have a clue. He won't have a clue because he's just told to read the notes, sit in the back, and don't say a word. We'll take care of that in the front bench.

Well I don't know if you heard the story of Peter the Pied Piper, in terms of following the Saskatchewan Party leadership right off a cliff, because the bottom line is there are families that struggle. And the member from Melfort may not notice, there are families that struggle. There are many families that struggle. Day in and day out they struggle. And your government came along and they decided through Bill 162 . . . It's right here. I'll send the member a copy if he wants to see it, Bill 162, in which this bill confers greater power to the sheriff, to the sheriff's office to seize your house and to garnishee your salary if you're not making a payment to certain companies.

Now what companies are these? That's my argument I'm making today. Who asked for this bill? And I will challenge the member from Melfort to find out for me, find out who asked for this bill. And you know what, Mr. Speaker? Guaranteed he won't know and guaranteed he won't provide that information because of that old phrase don't ask, don't tell. You know that old phrase, Mr. Speaker, is something that I think the member from Melfort is quite good at upholding. So I think it's important, Mr. Speaker, that we find out. And again I challenge the member from Melfort: you bring forward to me which individuals asked for this bill. And will he do that?

He's chirping from his chair. He asked to be engaged in the debate so he's chirping from his chair. Will he get me the information as to what parties asked for this bill, Mr. Speaker? Will the member from Melfort give me that information? And now he sits quietly, Mr. Speaker, because he doesn't want to find out. But we'll find out eventually. And when he doesn't come forward, Mr. Speaker, we're going to ask him other questions if he doesn't come forward. So either way the member from Melfort wants to chirp from his chair but can't provide any advice or leadership on this issue, which is prevalent with the Saskatchewan Party. Then at the very least,

he should learn to be able to understand the plight and the struggles of many young families, working men and women that work minimum jobs. And they have a tough time trying to buy a house, never mind a tough time trying to make ends meet.

And now they come along with *The Enforcement of Money Judgments Amendment Act* that's designed to garnishee salaries and seize your property, Mr. Speaker. It's very clear here. It's very clear. And guess what? In the process of the sheriff seizing your property and garnisheeing your salary, you're going to pay the sheriff's costs too, and you're going to pay his office costs. Now what happens if it's an American-based company? Does that apply here as well? What happens if it's a misunderstanding?

Suppose you buy a vehicle that's not very good and you sign this contract for the vehicle, and then all of a sudden the vehicle breaks down a month later. And basically you were, quite frankly, robbed of a decent vehicle. And what happens to that debt? So the guy says, you know, the dealership says, well he owes me money because he signed this debt. Well who's going to come to the defence of that young working man or woman saying, well I got ripped off by this deal. So my vehicle doesn't work. It had a really bad motor. And then I bought this vehicle. Who's going to support that particular person?

Or you sign an agreement for a product and you never get that product, and all of a sudden this goes through and guess what? You get your salary garnisheed because somebody didn't give you a proper vehicle or didn't give you a proper product? Well what, where are their rights? And what happens if the court case finds that the family that was involved was not in the wrong? Will the sheriff's office costs and the sheriff's cost himself be attached to the defender's bill? Well these are some of the questions that we need to know. And, Mr. Speaker, none of this information, none of this information is in here at all, none whatsoever.

So we got a lot of work to do on this bill. We got a lot of questions on this particular bill, Mr. Speaker, and we're far from pleased from the vagueness on this bill and we're far from pleased with knowing who asked for the changes in this bill. We want to know which of the Sask Party friends asked for this bill and the changes attached to this bill, Mr. Speaker. We want to know. And we want to know why the Sask Party accommodated them, when you know very well, in a time of opportunity and a time of a booming economy, Mr. Speaker, they bring in a bill of this sort, it doesn't make any sense whatsoever. And this is the reason why, Mr. Speaker, this Legislative Assembly needs to work and needs to hold the government to account, and that's why this particular opposition will continue doing so. And once again, Mr. Speaker, we're going to ask . . . The member from Moose Jaw starts to . . .

The Speaker: — It now being after the hour of 5 o'clock, this House stands recessed to 7 p.m.

[The Assembly recessed from 17:00 until 19:00.]

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